

Britain refuses to sign single currency deal

Dutch hopes collapse over summit treaty

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR, AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE Maastricht summit is unlikely to achieve any binding commitment to either political or economic union, it emerged yesterday as negotiations continued on new European treaties due to be signed in six weeks.

Britain said it would not sign a declaration committing the EC to a swift transition to a single currency, even though the new draft treaty on economic union received a warmer reception than most observers had predicted.

Ruud Lubbers, the Dutch prime minister who holds the Community presidency, also accepted that the summit would probably not lead to any definitive treaty on political union and said it should instead aim for a "work programme" for the 1990s.

Downing Street dismissed the declaration on a single currency, which governments are being asked to sign alongside the treaty on economic and monetary union, as unimportant, irrelevant and "not worth much diplomatic effort". But Norman Lamont told cabinet colleagues yes-



Lubbers: aiming for a 1990s "work programme"

terday that good progress had been made on the treaty itself. The Treasury was yesterday still digesting the 87-page document and the first definitive reaction is unlikely to come before the Chancellor's Mansion House speech tomorrow, but intense negotiating since the Luxembourg summit in the summer has seen Britain establish several key points.

The draft treaty confirms that there will be no "imposition" of a single currency, which remains several years down the track. Parliament will decide both whether and when Britain should participate, and there will have to be considerable convergence of the varied EC economies before EMU can become a reality. However, Douglas Hurd said of the draft: "There are four or five chapters where a great deal of work needs to be done, and where gaps are still quite wide. We will work hard to bridge those gaps."

Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission and architect of the definitive report on monetary union four years ago, made no public comment on the draft treaty yesterday, to the surprise of the Dutch government which was braced for a hostile reaction. M Delors and govern-

ments that have argued for a rapid, binding timetable for currency merger have been disappointed that the latest draft extends the "opt-out" clause to all 12 states.

Their greatest fear is that Germany, its western economy weakened by resuscitating the east, might drop out of EMU in several years' time - which would make currency union impossible this century. An aide to M Delors said: "If you widen the exemption, then you totally change the nature of the whole thing."

Although the treaty foresees great future extensions of the Community's power to watch over and control national economies, the long sequence of convergence that is supposed to end with the switch to the ecu and a European central bank is now cast as an experiment. The key question is whether Germany, which is wary of sacrificing a strong national currency for the unproven ecu, will take the crucial step.

The Germans are likely to be even more reluctant to do so in the absence of firm moves towards a more federal Europe with a common defence policy. Mr Lubbers yesterday expressed particular doubt about whether that would be achievable at Maastricht. He told the European Institute in Florence that Nato must remain the most important defence organisation, saying he thought more time was needed to reconcile the different proposals for EC defence.

Mr Lubbers said it would be better to review the situation later rather than to insist on settling everything in Maastricht, and the Community should look again at the consequences of the end of the cold war for the concept of neutrality. Explaining why he wanted to pursue more modest goals than a full union treaty, he said that "not

everything is clear in our minds" of what needed to be done for political union, including such questions as how the principle of subsidiarity would work. He also said the limits of sovereignty must be made clear. He thought the "institutional balance of the community had not yet been fully worked out".

A three-hour session at Downing Street involving most of the cabinet on Monday concentrated on the tactics to be adopted on political union topics. Britain is against introducing common defence and foreign policies and is also concerned about the extension of majority voting and about giving the European Parliament more power.

There will be a Commons debate before Maastricht, in which the prime minister is expected to speak, but there will be no white paper setting out Britain's views on treaty options. Nor will there be any referendum later on the Maastricht package. Downing Street is arguing that since the battle is about preserving parliamentary sovereignty, the calling of a referendum would be a contradiction of the whole policy.

If Maastricht does disintegrate without definitive programmes on economic or political unions, the whole matter will be passed on to inexperienced Portugal, which takes over the EC presidency in January for the first time since it joined the Community in 1986. The Portuguese had hoped that they would inherit a re-ordered EC and that they would simply implement the movement to a single market. If the Lisbon summit still fails to sort out the future direction of the Community, the problem will be inherited by Britain, which takes over the presidency in July.

Defence pledge, page 12
Leading article, page 17



Partners again: Presidents Bush and Gorbachev preparing to face the photographers in Madrid yesterday

Gorbachev says he is in control

From CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN MADRID

PRESIDENT Gorbachev yesterday took the Western stage for the first time since the failed coup and reminded President Bush and a worldwide television audience that he was still in charge of the Soviet Union. He and Mr Bush today jointly open the Middle East peace conference in Madrid, where the chief protagonists yesterday moved towards an apparent initial accommodation.

Mr Gorbachev later held an unprecedented meeting with Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, the first ever between a Soviet and Israeli leader. After meeting Mr Gorbachev, Mr Shamir was asked whether, under pressure from all sides, he would draw red lines beyond which Israel would not go.

He told reporters: "There are no red lines and I am feeling no pressures... There is no need to harden," he said. "There is no need to moderate. I haven't any red

lines. I have one line - the line of the Land of Israel."

Faisal al-Husseini, the Palestinian leader, said Palestinians could accept interim self-rule in the Israeli-occupied territories, provided this led eventually to an independent Palestine. Mr Shamir said that Israel could not wait any longer for peace, and that terrorist acts would not derail the conference.

Mr Gorbachev's declaration that he was in charge came against a background of diplomatic reports that another communist hardline coup may be attempted in Moscow this winter if the supply of basic necessities there does not improve drastically.

The chaotic situation inside the crumbling Soviet empire dominated the two-hour meeting at the Soviet

embassy. President Bush asked repeated questions about the power struggle and later appeared reassured with the answers he received. Mr Gorbachev disclosed that the breakaway Ukraine had reversed an earlier decision

Continued on page 22, col 3

Amos Oz, Conon Cruise O'Brien, Richard Owen, page 14
Diary, page 14

Back on stage with lack of snap

AS THE post-coup President Gorbachev returned yesterday to the heady world of international diplomacy, it became clear that his foreign as well as his domestic authority has been damaged seriously by the events of the past two months. (Christopher Walker writes)

Questions at his press conference with President Bush were dominated by the situation inside the Soviet Union rather than world ev-

ents. Kremlin watchers noted that the president had lost much of his aura of confidence. "A lot of the spring has gone out of his step, and a lot of the snap," said Steve Hurst, Moscow bureau chief of Cable News Network.

"I have never seen Gorbachev with such a thin schedule... What is happening in Madrid is a sign things have changed so much, you should not call this a summit," said Yuri Rostov, the anchorman of the newly formed Russian television channel.

"You did all right... you are still a master," Mr Bush said in a well-amplified aside after the news conference. Mr Gorbachev smiled in response, but those watching took away the clear impression that whatever the personal characteristics of the men, there were no longer leaders operating on the same plane.

TODAY IN THE TIMES

DEAR VIRGINIA



Problems, problems... An agony aunt's job does not stop when she leaves the office and Virginia Ironside is no exception. But which question is she asked most often? Page 15

FIRST TIMERS



Pickwick Papers was Dickens's first novel: can *Duty Week* do the same for Helen Zahavi? The Whitbread First Novel Award candidates are assessed on Page 14

DOUBLE DIP?



Ministers say the economy will recover, the CBI records a surge in confidence but economists fear a second recession. In today's newly expanded Business Section, Anatole Kaletsky looks at the "double dip" theory. Page 27

INSIDE

Arts	14,20
Births, marriages, deaths	18,19
Crosswords	19,35
Law Report	17,37
Letters	17,37
Media	13
Obituaries	18
Sport	36-40
TV & radio	21
Weather	22

Employers seeking chief executives, managers and other senior staff are advertising tomorrow in *The Times*' 12-page appointments section, circulated in Britain.



Jobs under threat in BBC market

By MELINDA WITTSTOCK
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of jobs are at risk in the BBC with the introduction of market-driven reforms intended to save it up to £50 million over the next four years in television production costs and overheads.

Under a new "internal market" scheme unveiled yesterday by Michael Checkland, the director-general, and John Birt, his deputy, all resource departments in the BBC - from studios, camera and film to makeup, scenery and graphics - will be forced to compete on price and quality against commercial rivals. From April 1993 all producers will be free to buy facilities from new BBC "business units" or from external sources, including ITV companies.

The scheme, Producer Choice, is seen as the start of the biggest shake-up in the BBC's history. Next Wednesday, the BBC will announce details of a second and more significant plan to cut excessive studio capacity, which may mean the closure of several regional studios and less programme-making at the BBC's White City television headquarters. Mr Checkland would not



put a figure on expected job losses yesterday, but broadcasting unions expect redundancies to reach four figures as they are phased in over the next few years.

Mr Checkland said that Producer Choice, the result of a study carried out by Mr Birt, who is to succeed him in 1993, would give the BBC "greater scope to make quality programmes while ensuring maximum value for money".

Continued on page 22, col 6

John Birt, page 13

Recession ending, says Lamont

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE government said yesterday it was now "quite clear" that Britain was coming out of the recession, and attributed the increase in business confidence recorded in the latest survey from the Confederation of British Industry to "the dramatic progress we have made in reducing inflation".

Norman Lamont, the chancellor, said there could "be little doubt that the economy is coming out of recession". Yet demand, output and employment have all fallen more sharply than the CBI's reports predicted, and yesterday's survey of 1,203 manufacturers forecast the continuing loss of 5,000 jobs a week in the sector.

The CBI said it could not say whether, as the prime minister and the chancellor have predicted, a recovery would take place in the second half of this year.

Leading article, page 17
CBI survey, page 23
Anatole Kaletsky, page 27
Comment, page 27

Dubrovnik waits for siege to resume

From TIM JUDAH IN DUBROVNIK

"WHEN those chickenheads have gone, the army will begin again." That was all the thanks the team of EC monitors got from one Dubrovnik citizen after they had battled their way into "the pearl of the Adriatic".

His cynicism was partly understandable. Colonel Silvio Mazzaroli, an Italian military attaché leading the team, could find little evidence that the beautiful old quarter of the city had been devastated. There will be no graphic pictures of ancient churches pounded by mortar fire to stir the conscience of the West.

The real disaster lies elsewhere. The soldiers have laid waste everything in their path on their way to Dubrovnik. The villages around have been burnt, emptied and looted.

For a month, the city has been without running water, electricity and fresh food. Its population has been swollen by 12,000 refugees. At first glance life looks normal, but it is an illusion that quickly fades. Sobbing gently before Titian's masterpiece *The Assumption* above the altar in Dubrovnik cathedral, an old woman said: "They are selling the candles in there." A nun said that, after a month without electricity, people had come to buy the stock of candles.

Down by the seashore, families fill buckets of water for washing and laundry. In the town centre, they queue patiently for drinking water distributed by fire engine. "We have enough left for

Continued on page 22, col 8

Vukovar bombed, page 12

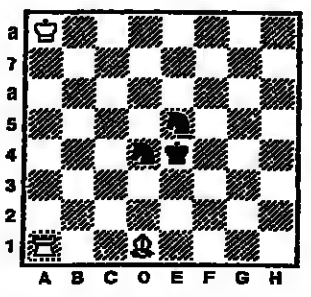
At last - white to win in 100 billion moves

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A POWERFUL computer has solved an old chess conundrum, in 100 billion moves. Using the latest type of parallel processor at the Los Alamos laboratory in New Mexico, a computer scientist has proved that a king, a rook and a bishop can defeat a king and two knights in 223 moves.

In a real match, in which the six remaining pieces might have fallen very differently, players would long since have settled for a draw. The computer showed that on average it might take as many as 120 moves to end the game in victory for king, rook and bishop.

The problem is one of a whole series of endgames without pawns which can go on almost indefinitely. The World Chess Federation has ruled that any game is a draw if checkmate cannot be forced in 50 moves after all the pawns have gone. The success



Black in the optimum defensive position

of Mr Stiller, reported in the November edition of *Scientific American*, does more than simply resolve a question in chess. It shows the power of parallel processors to perform analyses hitherto considered too complicated for even the most powerful of computers.

In a parallel processor, the electronic devices work simultaneously on different aspects of the problem, instead of in succession, one after the other. Parallel processors have more in common with the human brain, and are increasingly being applied to problems such as recognising patterns.

The program succeeded because Mr Stiller was able to ensure that it did not become bogged down in communi-

cations problems while it was working. "It's very important, sort of like discovering there is a new element," according to Hans Berliner, a computer scientist from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Mr Stiller says the program can resolve a five-piece endgame in about a minute.

During the Tilburg tournament now in progress, Anatoly Karpov and Gary Kasparov reached a very similar endgame. Kasparov managed to force a draw despite having only a rook left against Karpov's two knights and a bishop. The game, however, took 10½ hours before a draw was agreed.

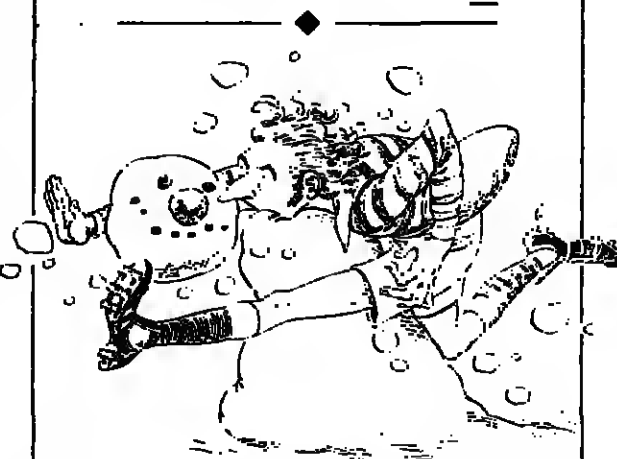
Women's champion, page 9

THE
FAMOUS GROUSE
FINEST SCOTCH WHISKY

PRESENTS

Rugby

CURIOUS FACT No 6.



In the winter of 1974, a French club match saw Villiers les Nancy a clear 62 points ahead of their opponents. Villeneuve. Villeneuve however, later claimed that they were only beaten because Villiers fielded an extra man - a snowman. Built by the bored Villiers full-back, the little chap, whilst totally stationary, was still quick enough to upend one of Villeneuve's tardy wingers.

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Generals of '71 rally for renewed battle over Europe



Jenkins: Britain unable to leave Europe aside

THE European question never seems to be settled in British politics. Monday's dinner of veterans of the Commons vote 20 years ago, in favour of Britain's membership of the community, was supposed to be a sentimental celebration with speeches by the victorious generals (Edward Heath and Roy [now Lord] Jenkins) and rose-tinted memories by the ageing colonels and captains of the historic struggle. But the evening turned into a call to arms in a continuing battle.

So controversial is the issue that many current MPs preferred not to attend and be associated with the main speakers. Margaret Thatcher sent her regrets, dressed up in a reaffirmation of a Europe of

Twenty years after the vote that took Britain into the EC, the European question shows no sign of being settled, writes Peter Riddell

nation states. Only Nicholas Scott of the present administration was present, although there were several of Mr Heath's close aides (Lords Pym, Rippon and Prior) and the hard core of pro-European Tories. Roy Hattersley expressed "a general distaste for meetings of old comrades' associations".

Others are now retired, either voluntarily or involuntarily, as was pointed out by Bill Rodgers, organiser of the dinner and unofficial whip of the 69 in 1971. Amid the mutual self-congratulation at having participated in a great event, there was a sense of regret that their votes 20 years ago had not resolved the question. Neither did the subsequent legislation, the 1975 referendum, or the battles in the 1980s over Britain's contributions to the budget. Now it is back again, with the Tory

agonising ahead of the Maastricht summit.

Lord Jenkins of Hillhead argued that every party leader apart from Mr Heath had mishandled the European issue at the price of not exercising Britain's leadership role in Europe, not safeguarding British interests and not even advancing narrow party interests. The British people, he conceded, were not Euro-enthusiasts, but they were also not interested in narrow legalistic definitions of sovereignty and would respond to a strong pro-European note.

For Mr Heath, it was inconceivable that Britain should again be on the sidelines by opting out of the European Monetary Union. He blamed any disillusionment on

"members of the current government who, for 12 years, have said out a single good thing about the community".

There is the paradox that all main parties, and most voters, now support active British participation in the community, but that Britain remains a "resentful and ill-suited" member, in the words of historian David Reynolds in his new book, *Britannia Overruled*. It is partly to do with differing approaches to methods of government, but is also a reflection of Britain's desire to keep open its options about its international role.

As Lord Jenkins noted, all parties seem unable to leave aside their most divisive issue. From

1903 to 1931, Conservative governments regularly made their difficulties worse by returning again to the divisive issue of tariff reform.

In 1971, he argued that the only sensible course for Labour was to lean back in a tolerant manner and leave the Heath government to get on with the European question. But it did the reverse. Similarly, in the past few years, the Tories have found it hard to avoid stumbling on Europe. John Major is unlikely to be the last British prime minister to attempt to obscure these contradictions by compromise and fudge.

Treaty talks, page 1
Leading article, page 17

Council can borrow to offset £24m BCCI loss

By KERRY GILL

WESTERN Isles council, which lost £24 million invested with the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International in July, was last night given permission to borrow a similar amount to help it out of its immediate financial dilemma.

Ian Lang, the Scottish secretary, said it was plain that the council had to have the money to meet spending commitments this financial year, but the council would be responsible for all interest and repayments.

The borrowing, likely to be from the Public Works Loan Board, is expected to lead to about 200 council redundancies and an increase in the poll tax from £77 a head to more than £200. The council will have to find more than £3 million a year for the next 30 years to meet interest repayments.

Mr Lang said: "I am satisfied that the Western Isles council will need to borrow during the remainder of this financial year in order to adjust to the consequences of its BCCI loss. I have therefore granted the council consent to borrow up to a maximum of £24 million in the period up to March 1992."

Cutbacks of up to 12 per cent are being considered in all departments and there could be a liquidation of assets. The council has even considered selling its headquarters in Stornoway and leasing them back. Tom Carter, acting finance director, said: "If we had not got consent we would have had to regard it as a bad debt which would have been crippling."

Mr Carter, who came out of retirement to help the council, said the authority was the biggest single employer in the Western Isles, which already suffered a very poor economy.

Mr Lang added: "In reaching this decision, I am not expressing any view on the circumstances which led the council to deposit money in BCCI. I am aware that these circumstances are being investigated by the Controller of Audit and that the matter may be the subject of a report to me by the Accounts Commission in due course."

"My consent is subject to the council itself meeting the entire costs of the borrowing. The loan charges will accordingly not be taken into account in the calculation of the council's revenue support grant for 1992-93 or future years. It will be for the council itself to decide how to meet these costs."

Last night Mr Calum MacDonald, Labour MP for the Western Isles, said that it was very disappointing that the government had not yet realised the full extent of the crisis facing the Isles.

"It is simply not good enough to give the council borrowing consent," he said. "The government must be prepared to help in a more positive way if we are to avoid massive job losses and cuts in services in months to come."

"I shall be seeking an urgent meeting with the Scottish office at which I hope to present a petition from the people of the Western Isles

SFO accused, page 23

Sir Leslie Martin wins top Riba prize

By JOHN YOUNG

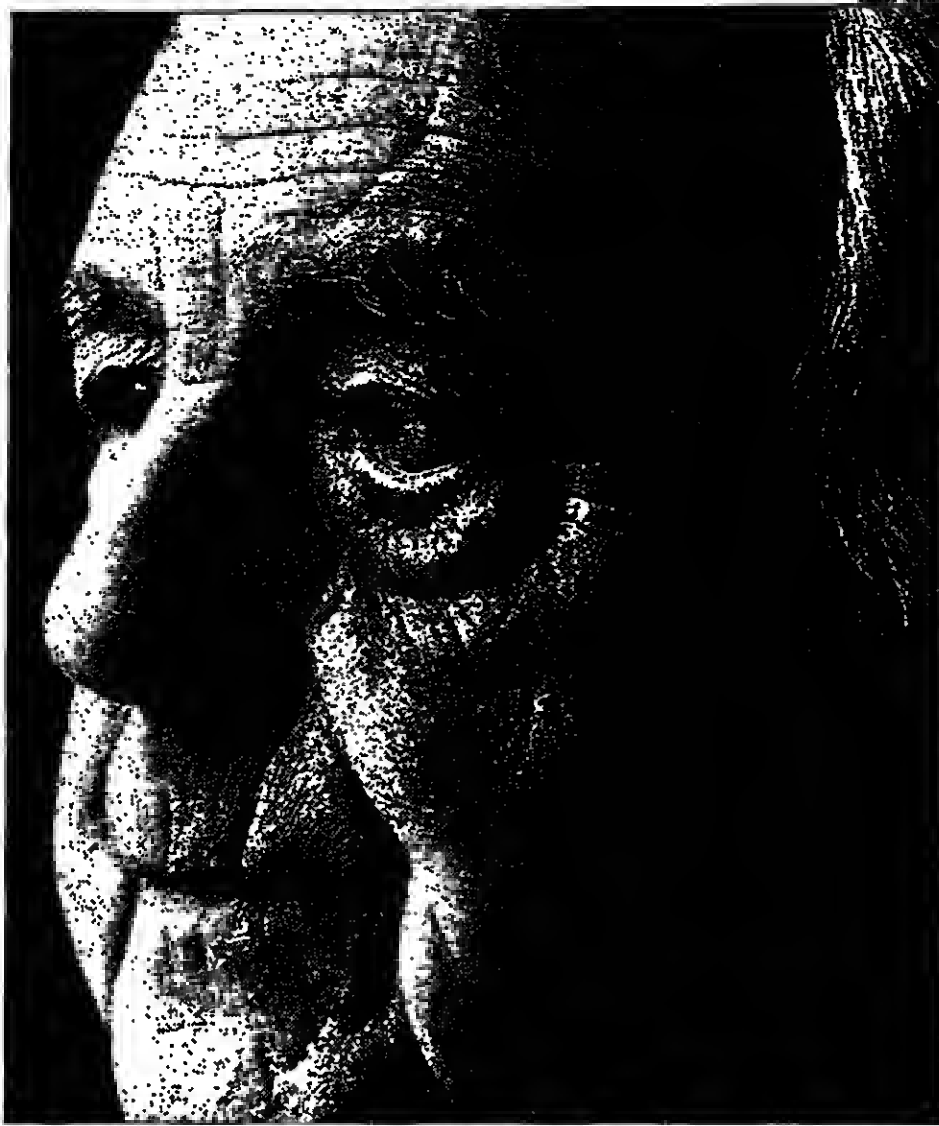
SIR Leslie Martin, a distinguished architect, yesterday received the 1991 Royal Institute of British Architects' trustees' medal for his work at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon. The work included acting as architectural and planning consultant for the master plan and design of the Centre for Modern Art and the Children's Pavilion.

Sir Leslie, aged 83, was born in Manchester and educated at the University of Manchester School of Architecture, where he became an assistant lecturer and received a doctorate in 1934. He became head of architecture at the University of Hull and worked for the London, Midland and Scottish Railway and for the London county council.

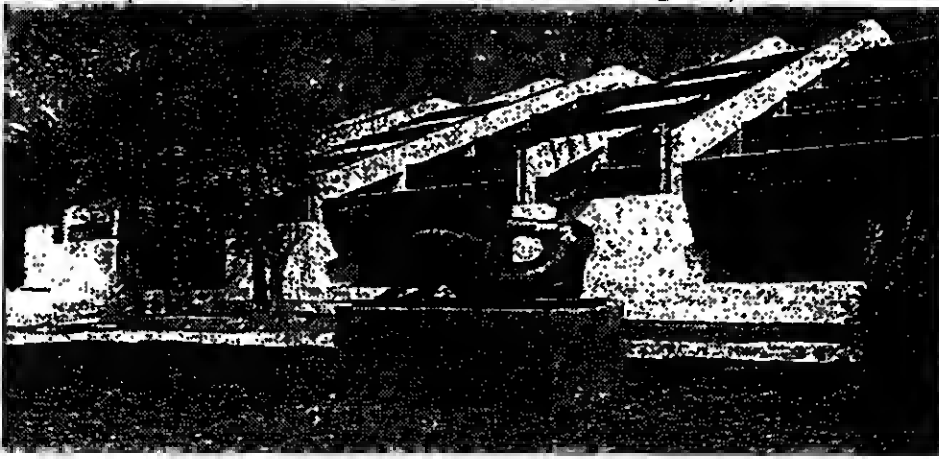
In 1956 he became professor of architecture at Cambridge University and was a consultant for building work at the universities of Hull, Leicester and London. He taught throughout his career and has been visiting professor at Oxford, Harvard, Yale and the Royal College of Art.

Sir Leslie received his knighthood in 1957 and was awarded the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture in 1973. The citation said that he had made a "truly outstanding contribution to architecture and planning".

The trustees' medal honours Sir Leslie for his part "in the creation of an urban space, the Gulbenkian Foundation's complex of buildings in its Lisbon park, crowned by his Centre for Modern Art and Acarte". The new award, inaugurated last year and endowed by Marley plc, recognises outstanding architecture anywhere in the world by a British designer.



Winning face, winning facade: Sir Leslie Martin (above) and (below) his Centre for Modern Art, with Henry Moore sculpture in the garden, in Lisbon



Fishermen angry at EC 'betrayal'

By MICHAEL HORNSBY AND KERRY GILL

FISHERMEN accused the government of betrayal yesterday in the wake of a European Community agreement on new measures to conserve fish stocks.

But David Curry, the fisheries minister, defended the deal, which was reached in Luxembourg on Monday night after two years of bitter argument.

"The fishermen must stop this constant bellyaching," said Mr Curry. "They say they want conservation but they oppose every single measure that is put forward. Every time they trot out the same old press releases saying it is the end of the world as they know it."

The agreement will limit the length of drift nets used for fishing tuna in the North Atlantic, so as to reduce the killing of dolphins and other sea mammals, and increase the minimum mesh size of nets used to trawl for cod and haddock in the North Sea, allowing more juvenile fish to escape.

The measures take effect

from June 1, 1992, but vessels which have been using drift nets for more than two years will be allowed a further 18 months during which they may use nets up to three miles.

This concession, required to appease the French, who have 37 vessels licensed to use drift nets in the North Atlantic, was bitterly attacked by Cornish fishermen. "We have been stabbed in the back once again by our own government," Mike Townsend, chief executive of the Newlyn-based Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation, said.

David Scott, chairman of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, based in Grimsby, said: "Time after time we commit ourselves to looking at new fisheries and time after time the politicians, egged on by ill-informed environmentalists, attempt to destroy us."

Mr Curry said the concession to the French had been necessary to get agreement. "Nothing is giving fishermen a worse image with the public than the drift-netting issue."

Heart disease toll 'could be halved'

By THOMSON PRENTICE, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

UPTO 70,000 people a year in Britain could be saved from premature death due to heart disease if cardiologists were able to spend more time on prevention and early treatment, specialists said yesterday.

A reduction of nearly 50 per cent in the annual toll of about 165,000 such deaths was feasible by the end of the decade, Douglas Chamberlain, president of the British Cardiac Society, said.

However, the target was now beyond reach because of a shortage of heart specialists, and that shortage was due largely to the short-sightedness almost 30 years ago of the medical profession itself, Dr Chamberlain said.

A national survey published by the society in collaboration with the Royal College of Physicians shows that although Britain has one of the lowest rates of heart disease in the world, there are seven times fewer cardiologists in the UK than in 20 European countries, and almost ten times fewer than in America.

Eight million people in 44 health districts of England and Wales do not have their own cardiologist to whom they can be referred for expert diagnosis, investigation and treatment, according to the survey.

"At least 150 cardiologists are needed in addition to the present total of 388 to provide even a modest level of service which still would not match that in Western Europe," Dr Chamberlain said.

Professor Dame Margaret Turner-Warwick, president of the Royal College of Physicians, said that the shortage was not a political issue and could not be laid at the door of any party. "The manpower debate has been going on for many years and we have to look at the role of the medical profession itself in our current difficulties."

Dr Chamberlain said that too few cardiologists were struggling to cope with an overload of patients, many of whom had to wait up to two years for heart operations, and as long as a year to be seen by a consultant.

Maxwell backs Davies against spying claims

By LYN JENKINS

ROBERT Maxwell, publisher of the *Daily Mirror*, deflected the newspaper's sacked foreign editor Niek Davies yesterday, against allegations that he was an Israeli intelligence agent and betrayed the whereabouts of Mordchai Vanunu to Mossad.

He said Mr Davies had been dismissed only for lying to his editor about a visit to Ohio in 1985, but that the *Mirror* group would stand by him against the allegations.

Mr Davies initially denied meeting arms dealer Clarence Kauffman at his home in Ohio in 1985, a claim used by Seymour Hersh, the American author, to support allegations in his book *The Samson Option*, that Mr Davies was involved in an arms dealing company along with Israeli agent Ari Ben-Menashe.

As Mr Davies was sacked yesterday, William Johnson, an American arms dealer, withdrew a denial he had made to the *Daily Mirror* about meeting Mr Davies, and said that they had met at Mr Kauffman's home to discuss a sale of weapons to Nigeria.

Mr Maxwell, asked on BBC Radio 4's *World at One* why Mr Davies was sacked, said: "Because regrettably, though we stand by the defence of him over the allegations that he

betrayed Vanunu, he lied to the editor." He dismissed other allegations contained in the book: "I'm sure the Mossad allegations are sheer rubbish and invention."

He said that the claims that Mr Davies had betrayed the whereabouts of Vanunu, an Israeli nuclear technician, while the latter was in England disclosing his story to *The Sunday Times*, had been confirmed by *The Sunday Times* as being a "lie and a fabrication".

Labour post for woman

Sylvia Heal, victor in the Mid Staffordshire by-election, yesterday became the eleventh female member of Labour's front bench team when Neil Kinnock named her as one of the party's junior spokesmen on health.

Ms Heal, a social worker and magistrate, lists equal opportunities for women and the disabled among her interests. She will also be a deputy to Jo Richardson on women's issues.

Dale Campbell-Savours, the MP for Workington since 1979, becomes a deputy to Ann Clwyd, who previously worked alone as Labour's spokesman on overseas aid (development and co-operation). Keith Bradley joins the social security team led by Michael Meacher.

Newspapers obey rulings

THE Press Complaints Commission has upheld only 13 complaints out of a total of 253 received between June and September. Ken Morgan, the commission's director, said the results showed that newspapers were keeping the threat of direct government control at bay by refraining from "repeating errors" for which they had already been reprimanded.

Lord McGregor, the commission's chairman, gave a warning last month that deliberate flouting of commission rulings would lead the next government, whether Tory or Labour, to introduce statutory regulation.

German visit

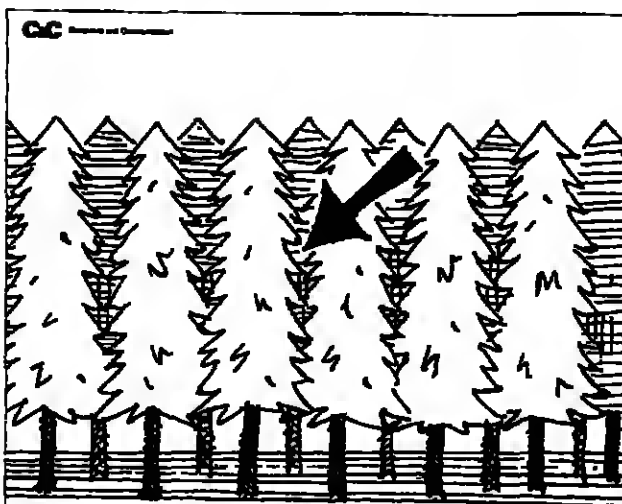
THE Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are to make their first state visit to a unified Germany next October, during her 40th year as monarch. The itinerary is likely to include parts of the former East Germany and Berlin.

CORRECTIONS

The picture described as being of Councillor Lady Anson in our feature on Life and Times on Monday ("What women want: a new manifesto") was in fact a picture of Lady Elizabeth Anson, the sister of the Earl of Lichfield. Lady Anson qualified as a barrister in 1952 and not 1974.

Roger Boyes' Warsaw Notebook (October 21) said that John Le Carré charged a Warsaw theatre £150 for each performance of *Spy*, a dramatization of *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*. The royalty finally negotiated by his German agent was in fact £26 a performance — the standard rate for Warsaw theatres. We apologise to Mr Le Carré for any implication of profiteering at the expense of the theatre.

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NEC's new colour monitors have a bias to green. Stringent tests in Scandinavia on static and electromagnetic emission standards have placed them top of the environmental acceptability tree.

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Find out more of the facts on NEC's PCs, printers and monitors by calling the number below.

NEC

Campaign to preserve Dylan Thomas's home

By TIM JONES

EVEN the wild, sad master poet of Wales could not have dreamt in his wildest excesses of drink-laden death that one day former prime ministers and presidents would be willing to fight to preserve the house in which he was born.

Although he wrote most of his poems in no 5 Cwmdonkin Drive, Swansea, Dylan Thomas did not appear to have much loved the Edwardian period house, which is now on the market for £89,000.

As a baby, when he cried, his father said "put the little bugger through the window" and as a youth, Thomas wrote to a friend complaining that his

bedroom was so small he had to walk outside to turn round. He wrote: "I first saw the light of day in a Glamorgan villa and, amidst the terrors of the Welsh accent and smoke of the tinplate stacks, grew up..."

Frank Jones, a farmer who bought the property in the "ugly, lovely town", said yesterday that he had decided to sell because he had had enough. He added: "The tourist board dismiss him as a boozier, but he was much, much more than that."

Last night Lord Callaghan of Cardiff confirmed that he and his friend, the former US president Jimmy Carter, an admirer of the work if not of the lifestyle

of Thomas, were willing to help the English department of the University College of Swansea to raise money to preserve the building. Lord Callaghan said: "I have spoken to former president Carter on the telephone and he is very keen on the idea."

Since he purchased the house eight years ago, Mr Jones says he has spent £30,000 on restoring it as a time capsule. Because of its connections, a premium of £15,000 has been added.

Thomas, who died in New York after a drinking spree in 1953, was always short of money. The asking price for the house in which he was born would have been beyond his imagination.



Thomas: little love for house where he was born

Jury is expected to judge the boredom rating of Coronation Street character

Libel court told of actor's humiliation over article

By ROBIN YOUNG

A HIGH Court jury is expected to spend the next five days considering a question that 16 million television viewers might think ridiculously easy to answer: is Ken Barlow of *Coronation Street* really boring?

The actor, Bill Roache, who has played the much derided Barlow since *Coronation Street* was conceived 31 years ago, is suing *The Sun* for libel because an article printed last November alleged that he was as boring in real life as his character was on screen.

Mr Roache said in court yesterday that he had been "devastated and humiliated" to read the article, which alleged that he was boastful, smug and self-satisfied, and had often come close to being fired from the series.

He had experienced a moment of "real horror" when he read a bold headline saying that he was "hated by the cast".

Mr Roache told his counsel, Charles Gray, QC, that he had sued over only part of the article because the rest "raked up things in my past" the details of which he did not want to go over for the sake of his family.

The trial has already emptied the bar of *Coronation Street*'s pub, the Rover's Re-

turn, as members of the cast filed instead into court 13 at the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand. Autograph hunters, including court ushers, had a field day as stars of the *Street* took turns in the witness box to tell the jury what a good bloke Ken Barlow really was.

Betty Driver, who has played Betty Turpin, the barmaid at the Rover's Return, for 22 years, told the jury that Bill Roache was "the least boring person I've ever met in my life".

Miss Driver said that Mr Roache was her best friend. She was godmother to his son. To call him smug was ludicrous and to say he was self-satisfied was "absolute rubbish". He was, she said, "just lovely", "a very, very capable actor", and "very dedicated". If any of the cast were in difficulties they would congregate in Mr Roache's room. He was one of the most loved people among the cast.

Johnny Briggs, who, as the *Street*'s sharp southerner Mike Baldwin, enjoyed an on-screen love affair with Ken Barlow's oow estranged wife, Deirdre, said that he had never heard anyone say anything detrimental about Bill Roache, who was neither smug nor self-satisfied, and



The actor William Roache, alias Ken Barlow of Coronation Street, leaving court yesterday with his wife, Sara

"in no way whatsoever" boring. In spite of their screen rivalry, in real life, he told the court, he and Mr Roache were the best of friends and golfing partners.

Michael Le Vell, who as the unemployed mechanic Kevin Webster lives next door to the Rover's, rated Mr Roache's professional ability "100 per cent" and said: "I've always found him the most genuinely approachable person." Bill

Waddington, best known as the *Street*'s know-all busybody, Perry Sugden, said that he had had five roles over the years but considered Bill Roache "far beyond me as an actor".

Mr Waddington said that Mr Roache helped him as a new recruit to cope with technical rehearsals and was "very supportive". As to whether he thought Mr Roache was smug or self-

satisfied, Mr Waddington replied: "Can I put Bill Roache into one word? He is a gentleman."

Finally, Amanda Barrie, who plays Ken Barlow's present girlfriend, the café owner Alma Sedgewick, said: "Bill Roache is the last person anyone would hate. He's not a hateful man." She said that he was one of the nicest and most professional actors she had ever played with and "a

fierce worker".

The *Sun*'s article, written by Ken Irwin, who was described as "a *Street* insider from the start", claimed that Bill Roache was "universally nicknamed BKB - Boring Ken Barlow". The witnesses from the cast said that they had never heard of it. Mr Waddington commented: "I thought it was a motor bike". The hearing continues today.

Judicial review ruling a test for NHS trusts

By JILL SHERMAN, SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

A COUNCIL was yesterday granted leave for a judicial review over a health authority's alleged failure to follow proper consultation procedures in setting up an NHS trust.

Rochdale metropolitan borough's application against Rochdale health authority is the first case of its kind and could have implications for other trust applications.

The council argues that the authority did not provide enough financial information in its consultation documents to allow the public to assess whether an adequate level of health care could be provided.

Under government guidelines prospective trusts have to provide broad financial information in their applications, including the unit's financial strategy, and cost implications of staffing and information systems.

More detailed information on income and expenditure has to be submitted separately to the NHS management executive.

Following concern expressed by the Commons health committee early this summer, all successful trust applicants will in future have to publish three-year business plans, but not until the month before they become established as self-governing hospitals.

Anthony Scrivener, QC, for the Lancashire council, said that the case raised the question of whether financial details of the Rochdale trust project should be made avail-

able to those who had to be consulted, including the local authority.

Mr Justice Hodgson decided there was a case for an application for review and a provisional date for a full hearing has been fixed for December 16.

Rochdale council is now seeking court orders quashing the health authority's decision not to release certain financial information, and a declaration that the consultation procedure followed by the health authority was in breach of provisions of the 1990 National Health Service Care Act.

The council will also apply for an order forcing the health authority to carry out proper consultations, including revealing details of the trust business plan to the council.

The health department said yesterday that the health authority had made all the necessary information available. "The Rochdale health care trust gave three full months for consultation and followed the guidance on the amount of financial information required in their application document," a health department spokesman said.

Gloria Oates, the chief executive of the health authority, said that the authority had fulfilled all the criteria on consultation. "The application document had a section on finance, including income and expenditure accounts," she added.

David Williams, chairman of Rochdale's shadow health board and one of the main figures behind the action, said he was delighted with yesterday's decision. "Our argument is that the consultation process was meaningless," he said.

"We argued in court that it was flawed in that we did not have access to the business plan and as such could not make any sort of judgement about the level of health care available in Rochdale. We want them to give us a business plan."

Rochdale was given approval in principle last month to become a trust in April 1992 pending the outcome of the application for a judicial review.

Father left to die, QC says

By PAUL WILKINSON

A DAUGHTER who stood to benefit from her father's will left him to die after she found he had taken a drugs overdose, a jury was told yesterday.

Keith Tremonger, aged 58, had changed his will in his daughter's favour only seven weeks previously, Conrad Seagroatt, QC, for the prosecution, told Nottingham crown court.

He said the daughter, Cheryl Shacklock and her husband Robert, both aged 38, and a neighbour, Patrick Kendrick, found Mr Tremonger on the kitchen floor at his home in Arnold, Nottinghamshire.

He had taken a mixture of drugs but was still alive. "They decided to leave him there to die," he said. "He was left for something like 37 hours and finally died."

Mr Seagroatt said that the father was depressed, upset and lonely after a 16-year relationship had come to an end. He also faced charges of indecent assault involving a girl aged 13.

At an inquest on Mr Tremonger, Robert Shacklock had given evidence that he had last seen him alive on a Thursday night and found him dead at Saturday lunchtime.

"It became apparent that the three defendants had come to some agreement to hide what had happened," Mr Seagroatt said.

The three have pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. The Shacklocks have also denied manslaughter and Mr Shacklock has denied committing perjury at the inquest.

The hearing continues today.

Crime initiative hailed as success

By QUENTIN COWDRY, HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

A FALL of 39 per cent over two years in the number of recorded burglaries in a Wolverhampton housing estate will be among a batch of statistics cited by ministers today as evidence that their "safer cities" anti-crime programme is working.

The programme, launched in 1988, is the flagship of the Home Office's attempts to tackle crime by forging partnerships between local authorities, the police, the probation service, industry and community groups. According to a report published by the department today, the initiative is beginning to achieve small, but measurable, reductions in crime in some areas.

Among the successes noted are a 39 per cent drop in recorded burglaries between 1988 and 1990 on the Lunt housing estate, Wolverhampton; a 9 per cent fall in car crime in 1990 in a large multi-storey car park in Nottingham; and a 9 per cent fall in recorded crime in the second quarter of 1991 in Birmingham city centre. The report also claims that the initiative has led to a drop in fear of crime in parts of the 16 cities covered by the programme.

Ministers said last night that the report indicated that the government's new emphasis on "multi-agency" approaches to tackling crime held out the best hope of reducing offending, though they accepted that the successes were limited.

John Patten, Home Office minister of state, said last night: "The home secretary and myself are very pleased with these first emerging results of concentrated local community action against crime. We intend to develop the programme."

However, the report is unlikely to still criticism from Labour and some criminologists that the programme, to receive £7.1 million from the government this year, is under-funded. Many of the Home Office-appointed officials who run the projects are also calling for increased central funding.

Judy Clements, co-ordinator of Birmingham Safer Cities, said it was absurd that

each project received about £240,000 a year, regardless of the size of the town or city it served. "Birmingham has 171 police beats and a population of around one million, yet we get roughly the same grant as Hartlepool, which has 17 police beats and a population of under 90,000," she said.

Project organisers accept that efforts to curb property offences in one area can simply divert burglars and car

thieves to neighbouring districts. That, they say, further backs their arguments for more widespread preventive campaigns.

The project has now spread to three crime-ridden council estates on Birmingham's southern margins, where residents are receiving grants to improve the security of their homes, and efforts are being made to improve leisure facilities for children.



Survivor: Alexandra Dixon, who was carried to safety after being gored by an elephant in Kenya

Elephant attack hero honoured

By ALAN HAMILTON

A CAMBRIDGE zoologist who saved a colleague from being gored to death on the tusks of a matriarchal elephant was decorated with the Queen's Gallantry Medal at Buckingham Palace yesterday.

Christopher Thoulless, of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, and Alexandra Dixon, head of the overseas conservation programme at London zoo, both aged 31, were tracking elephants in Kenya in October last year when Miss Dixon was charged by a three-ton female. She lost her footing and the elephant gored her, tossed her in the air and was about to kneel on her and

gore her again when Dr Thoulless threw stones at the animal and beat it between the eyes with his hands. He then carried Miss Dixon 300 yards to safety.

After the presentation by the Queen, Dr Thoulless, who returns to Kenya today, recalled the elephant attack. "I was quite frightened, but there was nothing else I could do," he said. Miss Dixon, who has recovered from her injuries and is back at work at Regent's Park, said: "I had given up when Dr Thoulless rescued me. It was an act of very considerable bravery which undoubtedly saved my life."

Aussies kick Tebbit test into touch

By JOE JOSEPH

NORMAN Tebbit will have his work cut out at Twickenham on Saturday rounding up fickle Australians. None of the thousands of Australians who have made Britain their home is planning to support England against the Wallabies.

Mr Tebbit invented a novel national-ity test, originally linked to cricket: when it comes in the crunch, which team do you support?

"I'll risk Norman Tebbit," said Rnn Clarke, the Australian long-distance runner who is now managing director of a chain of London sports clubs and has been living in England for nearly a decade. The writer and television presenter Clive James also fails the Tebbit test. "I don't really support countries, I support people. I support Campepe, and I'm glad to see that the rest of the Australian team does too," he said.

Many Australians, possibly fearful of Tebbit's wrath, have fled the country. Barry Humphries is in Los Angeles. Rolf Harris is playing his wobble-board

somewhere in Australia; the actor Keith Michell is in Canada; Rupert Murdoch is in America; and the cricket commentator Ritchie Benaud is wintering at Sydney's Channel 9. Bruce Gyngell, the chief of TV-Am, is still in London, but a spokeswoman said: "He's too busy sorting out TV-Am's future to watch rugby on television."

Bruce Matthews, chairman of Satellite Information Services, which brings horse racing to betting shops, and the former managing director of News International, publishers of *The Times*, said: "I've been here since the early 1970s and I'm certainly vigorously supporting Australia. I expect them to win by ten points."

Dee Nalan, the Australian-born editor of *Metropolitan Home* magazine and a London resident for 12 years, said: "There is no way I'd pass the Norman Tebbit test. My husband is English and mad keen on rugby. We're both going to the match on Saturday. But we're sitting separately."

David Looker, president of Australian Business in Europe, advises calling off the search. "When it comes to sport, every Australian living in London fails the Norman Tebbit cricket test, and proudly."

Mr Looker is worried that few Australians know their national anthem. He wants them to learn it so that they can give their team a boost. In the spirit of fair play, we publish here the words of *Advance Australia Fair*.

*Australians all, let us rejoice, for we are young and free
We've golden soil and wealthly toil, our home is girt by sea
Our land abounds in nature's gifts, of beauty, rich and rare
In history's page let every stage, Advance Australia Fair*

*In joyful strains then let us sing, Advance Australia Fair
Now you know why Frank Field sang
Waltzing Matilda instead.*

Sport, page 40

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MONTEGO 2.0 DLX	12,225	12.5	101	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
SIERRA 1.8 LX TD	12,860	15.2	99	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO

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Police
blamed
Hillsbo
retires



Decision
disciplin

Children's
officer
not gay

Police chief blamed over Hillsborough retires early

By PETER DAVENPORT

THE senior officer in charge of police at the Hillsborough football stadium when 95 Liverpool supporters were killed in a crush on the terraces is to be retired from the force on health grounds, it was disclosed yesterday. He will not face a planned disciplinary tribunal.

Chief Supt David Duckenfield, aged 48, who was criticised for his conduct on the day by the official report into the disaster, was suspended from his post when Lord Justice Taylor's interim findings were published in August, 1989, four months after the deaths.

Relatives of the victims said last night that they felt yesterday's decision had cheated them of justice.

Richard Wells, the new chief constable of South Yorkshire police, said that Mr Duckenfield was suffering from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder and

was too ill to continue as a police officer. "I quite understand that the bereaved relatives and friends will be angry at my decision, since it rules out Mr Duckenfield's involvement in the planned disciplinary tribunal for which South Yorkshire police have been preparing for some months," he said. "David Duckenfield has become the symbolic focus of much of the anguish felt by those who were so hurt by the tragedy, but I must deal with the man, not the symbol."

Mr Wells, who took over the force after the retirement of Peter Wright, the chief constable at the time of the disaster, said that Mr Duckenfield was another victim of the Hillsborough tragedy. He said that his decision was taken after "careful consideration" of a report from the police staff surgeon, an independent physician.

Philip Hammond, of the Hillsborough Families Support Group, whose son aged 14 was among those who died, said: "We feel we have been cheated of justice. David Duckenfield was the man to blame because he was in overall charge. How he could be suspended at first, and then only go off sick when disciplinary charges were brought, defeats me."

The chairman of the group, Trevor Hicks, whose two daughters died, echoed the feeling of injustice, but said the group had to accept that Mr Duckenfield was ill.



Duckenfield: will not face a disciplinary tribunal

Decision will renew discipline debate

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

CHIEF Supt Duckenfield's early retirement with a pension comes at a time when the Home Office is considering new guidance to chief constables on discipline procedures for officers with medical problems. The decision to allow the South Yorkshire officer to leave will almost certainly renew the debate over the discipline procedure.

The average pension for an officer of Mr Duckenfield's rank in his circumstances would be about £23,000 a year. He could cash a quarter of his entitlement, giving him a £86,000 lump sum and £17,250 a year.

The pension is enhanced because Mr Duckenfield is leaving the police through ill health. Although he has served 28 years he will draw

the pension for 30 years' service, the maximum. It will be index linked.

Critics of the discipline system say the present regulations allow officers facing discipline to escape examination by producing medical evidence. The need for change was raised after Scotland Yard agreed in 1988 to allow Detective Supt Tony Lundy to resign, rather than face a discipline hearing.

The Home Office has already issued some guidance reminding forces that they can review a pension if the officer seems to have recovered. Now new guidance is on the way which calls for chief constables to seek a third medical opinion beyond the force's chief medical officer and the officer's GP.

Children's officer 'not gay'

By DAVID YOUNG

THE former social worker at the centre of allegations that sex abuse had taken place at the Leicestershire children's homes he ran denied yesterday that he was a homosexual.

Frank Beck, aged 49, was giving evidence at a Leicester Crown Court trial, where he denies 27 charges of physical and sexual abuse.

The trial judge earlier this week ordered the withdrawal of five other charges, three of huggery and two of assault occasioning actual bodily harm. He said that the prosecution evidence could not justify verdicts.

Mr Beck yesterday told the jury at the start of the trial's seventh week that he was not gay. He had served nine years in the Royal Marines and would have been thrown out had he been involved in homosexuality.

He denied allegations made during prosecution evidence that he had been an interrogator and boasted about torturing prisoners or others. After leaving the marines he had a variety of jobs before he worked at a Leicester probation hostel for a year and with Northamptonshire social services for another 12 months.

After completing a two-year course, he was put in charge of the Poplars children's home in Market Harborough in 1973, when he was 31.

Two of Mr Beck's former deputies, George Lincoln, aged 39, of Sudbury, Suffolk, and Peter Jaynes, aged 42, of Chatham, Kent, deny a total of four charges.

The trial continues.

Traditions win Punch title fight

By PETER DAVENPORT

IT IS not every day that someone can win a British championship aided by dexterity with a swazzel. Yesterday, however, Mikel Dee did just that.

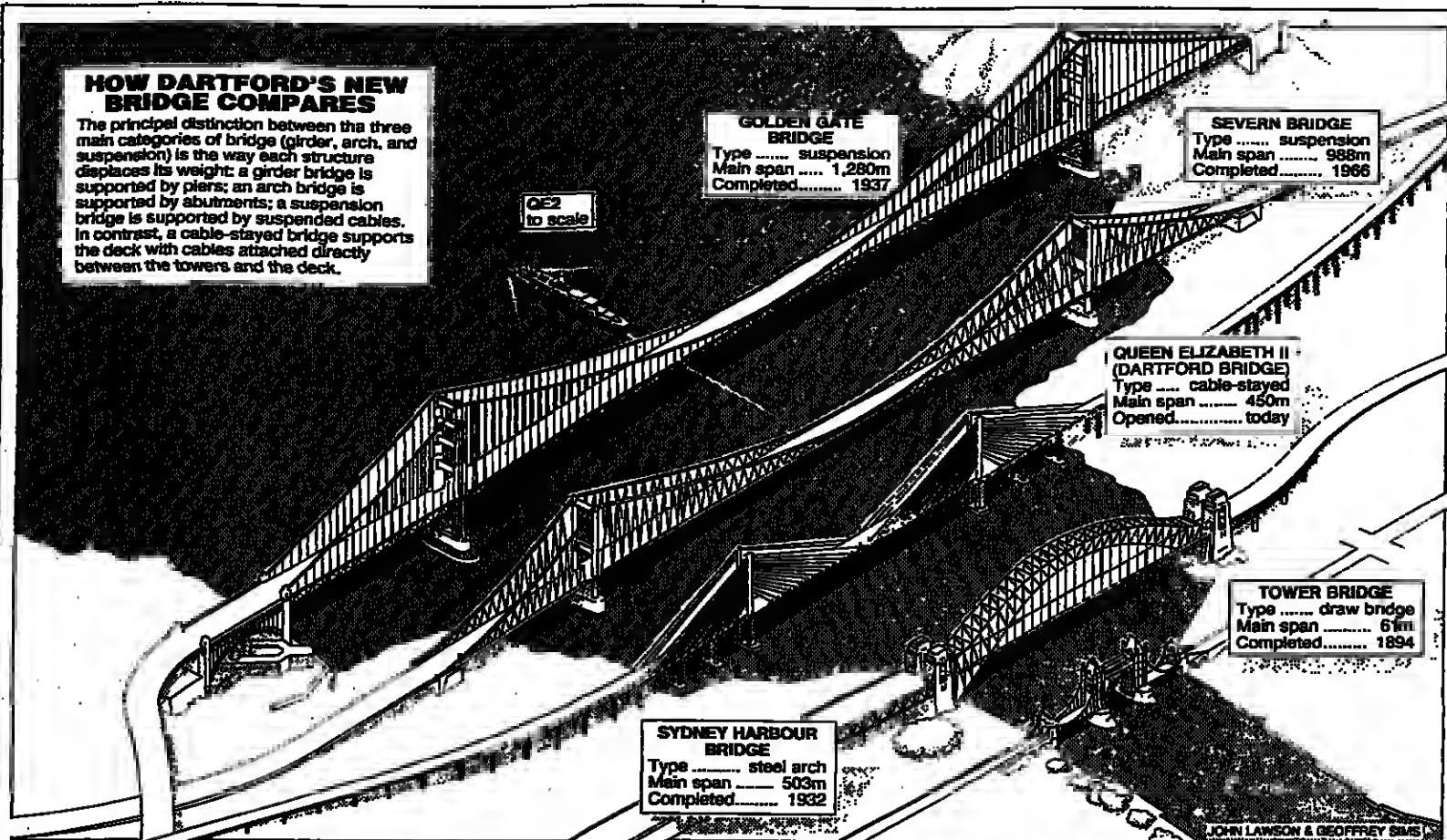
The swazzel is the tiny device, details of which are a trade secret, held in the mouth to give the distinctive voice of a Punch and Judy professor. Because it is hard to master, many in striped booths have forsaken the swazzel, to the dismay of traditionalists.

Yesterday, the fifth British Punch and Judy championships were held at Patrington, near Hull, with extra marks given for use of the swazzel. Geoff Barry, the organiser, said: "Some professors cheat and say they use a swazzel, but don't. It is very difficult to master and many people end up swallowing them. But we want to encourage Punch and Judy to continue in the traditional manner so we decided to pay special attention to the use of the swazzel this year."

Six of Britain's estimated 150 "professors" vied to be national champion. Each did 12 minutes before six judges and an audience of 300.

Mikel Dee, aged 50, of Kirby-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, triumphed despite having woken up yesterday to find that thieves had stolen his new car with his puppets and his booth. Mr Dee won with borrowed equipment, but his own swazzel.

"Details of just what a swazzel is are a closely guarded secret handed down in families," he said. "I can say that it took me 18 months to master how to use one."



Spanning the years: how London's Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, to be opened to traffic by the Queen today, compares with its more illustrious counterparts. The bridge, which is the first to be built downstream of the City of London since Tower Bridge in 1894, will double existing river crossing capacity between Dartford, in Kent, and Thurrock, Essex, to 130,000 vehicles a day in each direction, and will help to ease one of the most notorious traffic bottlenecks on the M25. It is the largest cable-stayed bridge in Europe and cost £120 million. Although closely related to the suspension bridge, the cable-

stayed bridge is more functional, less elegant and significantly cheaper. The new bridge is the first large-scale infrastructure project this century to be wholly financed by the private sector. The consortium of backers has a 20-year lease from the transport department to operate the bridge, which must be handed

back to the public sector if tolls cover construction costs sooner than expected. Only southbound traffic will use the four-lane bridge, and tolls will be the same as for northbound traffic in the two Dartford tunnels: 80p for cars, £1.30 for two-axle lorries and £2.10 for articulated lorries.

back to the public sector if tolls cover construction costs sooner than expected. Only southbound traffic will use the four-lane bridge, and tolls will be the same as for northbound traffic in the two Dartford tunnels: 80p for cars, £1.30 for two-axle lorries and £2.10 for articulated lorries.

Wrens to remain at sea, says admiral

By MR HAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE decision to send Wrens to sea is irreversible, in spite of a number of "titillating" stories appearing in newspapers. Admiral Sir Julian Oswald, chief of naval staff, said yesterday.

He said that he fully supported the decision to allow women on Royal Navy warships, and that the advantages were enormous.

Since the announcement in February last year that the traditional ban on women at sea was to end, 250 Wrens have served on board ships, all of them converted to allow separate sleeping quarters and showers for the Wrens.

Sir Julian praised the "first class" performance of the Wrens on HMS Brilliant during the Gulf conflict, on which 20 Wrens, 16 ratings and four officers, served.

A number of navy wives have claimed that their husbands would be tempted to form relationships with Wrens. Sir Julian said, however, that the decision to send women to sea was the right one. "We had to go down this road and the decision is totally irreversible."

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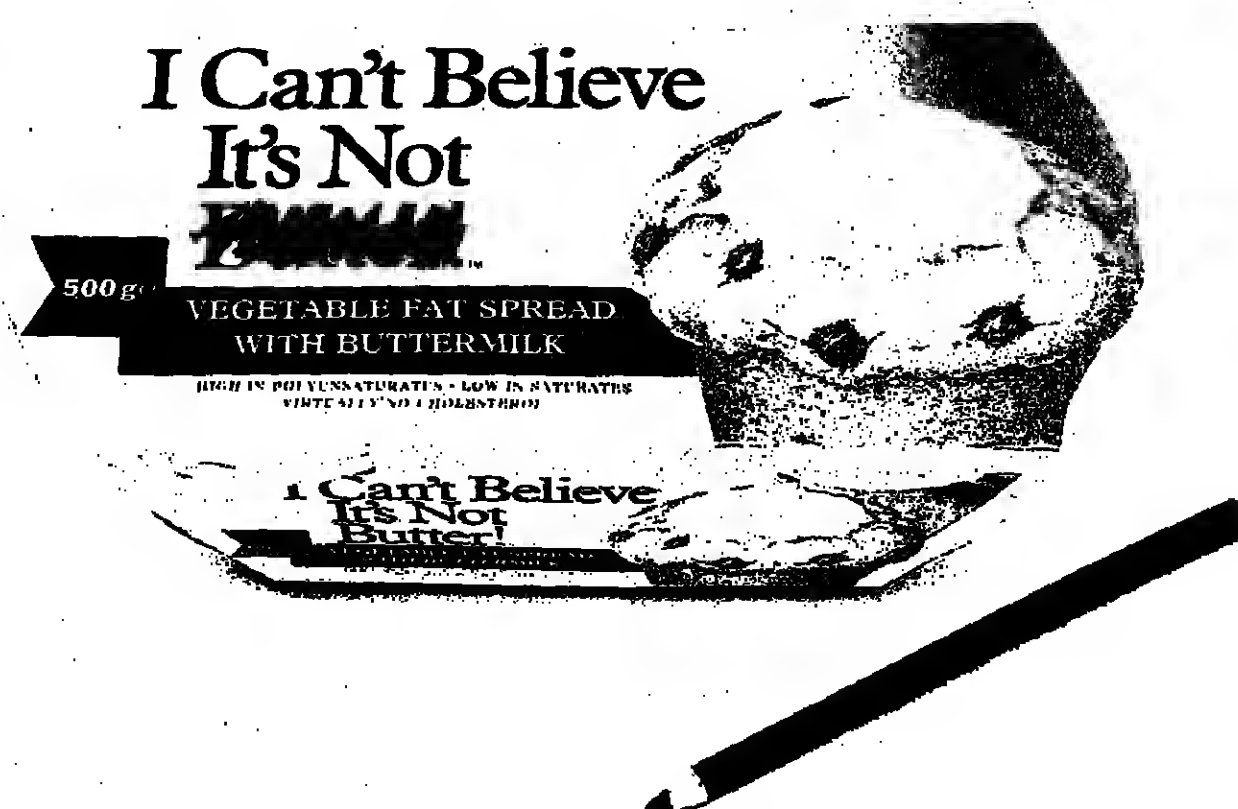
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Owner
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arch

for leak

20 dies

a warm

Ownership wrangle as stolen Renoir turns up in Japan

By SARAH JANE CHECKLAND, ART MARKET CORRESPONDENT

A £450,000 Renoir painting stolen from the Bond Street gallery Wildenstein four years ago in what was called the "fishing line theft" has turned up at the gallery's Tokyo branch, leading to a dispute over who owns it.

Had the painting, *A Vase of Flowers*, surfaced in this country, there would be no question that the rightful owners would be the Lloyds underwriters who reimbursed Wildenstein for its loss. Under Japanese law, however, title can be passed on in respect of stolen goods purchased in good faith. The insurers and the present possessor are now locked in a civil dispute over ownership.



The one that got away: Renoir's *A Vase of Flowers*

The saga began on April 4, 1987, shortly after Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* fetched the world record of £24 million, and flower paintings were all the rage. A policeman on night patrol in Bond Street spotted a hole in the window of the Wildenstein gallery. There was no alarm or immediate signs of disturbance. However, a display case 12ft inside the window was empty.

The only feasible theory for the theft, according to detectives, was that the painting, which measures 14 by eight inches, was "fished" out of the window with a rod and hook so thin that they could not be detected by the security system. A Scotland Yard spokesman spoke of the painting being stolen to order. "They knew exactly what they wanted," he said.

Nothing was heard of the painting until last month when a Japanese man brought it into Wildenstein's in Tokyo and asked for a valuation. Staff asked him to leave the painting with them for inspection, and notified Interpol.

Michael Payton, solicitor with Clyde and Co, which represents the Lloyds underwriters, said: "The man said he was acting for a finance company, which had been asked to advance money on it. We got a court order for the picture to be impounded while title is established."

The insurers appointed an investigator, who discovered that the painting may have passed through Switzerland on its way to Japan. Switzerland is another country in which title can pass if a sale takes place in good faith.

New Scotland Yard and Wildenstein staff assume that the painting must have changed hands since the theft, because the present possessor of the painting would never have taken it into Wildenstein's knowing it to have been stolen.

Mr Payton is optimistic that the underwriters will recover their money. "There are no legal issues," he said. "There is no indication that the person who handed the painting to the finance company is going to claim it." However, the Civil Code of Japan, 1972, in which the country's laws are enshrined, says that title for stolen goods can pass if the object is bought "in good faith and without negligence". According to Article 194, "the injured party or the loser cannot recover the thing unless he reimburses the possessor for the price of it".

Kuwaitis launch poppy appeal

THE Last Post echoed around walls hanging with portraits of the Kuwaiti royal family yesterday as the Royal British Legion poppy appeal was launched on foreign soil for the first time in its 70-year history.

British Gulf commanders and veterans assembled at the Kuwaiti embassy, London, to watch Ghazi Al-Rayes, the Kuwaiti ambassador, unveil a plaque dedicated to British servicemen who fought to free his country.

"British soldiers died in the fight to liberate Kuwait. They left a part of themselves in our hearts," he said, asking those present to remember also more than 2,000 of his countrymen being held hostage in Iraq.

Archie Hamilton, the armed forces minister, who laid a wreath beneath the plaque, said funds raised by the appeal would be needed to help servicemen who fell victim to imminent cuts in the armed forces. "That, too, will produce many difficulties in terms of resettlement of our servicemen and we know we can count on the Royal British Legion to play a very important role in this as well," he said.

The poppy appeal raised nearly £13 million last year, enabling the legion to help more than 100,000 people, veterans of this century's wars and conflicts and their families.



Paying tribute: Ghazi Al-Rayes, the Kuwaiti ambassador, at yesterday's ceremony

Computer will jog solicitors' memories

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENT

THE rising cost to solicitors of bailing out dishonest or incompetent colleagues has led to the creation of a company that aims to capitalise on solicitors' abysmal record in remembering key dates.

The company, Professional Memories, is a computerised memory service that aims to cut the cost of negligence claims arising from missed dates, and papers being lodged "out of time".

The founder, Clement Noel, a consultant with his former law firm in Surrey, said: "The aim is to make it impossible for solicitors to overlook a vital date, and not to be dependant on the availability and continuity of trained staff. It is a fact of life that most solicitors forget a vital date on some occasion in their careers."

Research indicated that about 60 per cent of negligence claims were time claims, he said. This year, the cost of professional indemnity insurance in England and Wales is due to rise by more than 34 per cent, with the indemnity fund paying out £120 million.

Under Mr Noel's scheme, which is backed by a £2 million indemnity policy from Sun Alliance, solicitors pay a fee of £22, inclusive of VAT, and receive two recorded delivery reminders of any date up to six years ahead. The scheme will be launched next week.

Fake nurse tries to steal baby

Police are searching for a woman who posed as a nurse to try to take a newborn baby from the John Radcliffe hospital, Oxford.

The woman, aged about 30 and wearing what appeared to be a nurse's uniform, walked into a single room in the hospital's maternity unit and asked to take the two-day-old baby from its mother, aged 23, who became suspicious and alerted staff.

Police questioned staff yesterday but confirmed that none was near the room when the attempt was made.

Nimmo banned

The actor Derek Nimmo was fined £200 and banned from driving for 12 months by Plymouth magistrates after admitting to drink driving.

Pit bull attack

Michael Pryer, a police constable aged 31, had 36 stitches in his face after being attacked by a pit bull terrier in West Ham, east London.

Noise curb

An abatement notice has been issued against a police station in Cardiff after residents complained of barking from stray dogs kept there.

Oil tanker leak

Thousands of gallons of crude oil leaked from a tanker at Caovey Island, Essex.

Paper boy dies

A newspaper boy aged 14 died after being hit by a car in Shirley, Hampshire.

Milk marketing

Reply to monopoly abuse charge due

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN has been given until today to respond to a formal warning from Brussels that the Milk Marketing Board is abusing its monopoly powers. Unless John Gummer, the agriculture minister, can persuade Brussels that the abuse is being dealt with, or produce new evidence in mitigation, the government may find itself before the European Court of Justice.

Mr Gummer received a "reasoned opinion" from Raymond MacSharry, the European agriculture commissioner, setting out the case against the board about a month ago, and should have replied by Friday. He asked for more time to take legal advice and to consult the concerned parties.

At stake is the board's exclusive right to buy milk from the 30,000 dairy farmers in England and Wales and sell it to processors at prices fixed annually in negotiation with the Dairy Trade Federation. Although those monopoly powers received the European Commission's blessing after Britain joined the European Community in 1973, their legal interpretation is now being challenged.

The nub of the dispute is the commission's argument that semi-skimmed or low-fat milk, which now accounts for 40 per cent of the British milk market, is a processed product and falls outside the board's powers. It argues that farmers

who separate the fat themselves, or have a commercial interest in a dairy that does so, are under no legal obligation to sell to the board.

Brussels has intervened at a delicate juncture in the 58-year history of the milk marketing monopoly. Mr Gummer has put pressure on the board to become more market-oriented, and the board has suggested turning itself into a voluntary co-operative, a proposal that has sharply divided dairy farmers.

About 300 rebel farmers, who have been skimming their own milk and selling direct to customers, have been warned by the board that their producer licences could be withdrawn if they do not sign agreements recognising their liability to pay a penalty levy should they continue to sell milk directly. The deadline for signing the agreements expired on Monday. The board said that a "significant proportion" of the rebels had signed.

Critics of the milk marketing scheme say that it is stifling innovation, allowing continental dairy products to take a growing share of the British market, and depressed returns to farmers while keeping the consumer price of milk higher than it need be. Many small farmers in remote areas, however, value the security of daily milk collection and a monthly cheque from the board.

Fish warms to Scots offering

By KERRY GILL

GLOBAL warming may be to blame for an invasion of Scottish waters by sharp-toothed trigger fish, which can maul their way through shellfish, wreak havoc among salmon on fish farms and devour an underwater thermometer with a single bite.

Trigger fish usually frequent the warm Mediterranean, so scientists are baffled as to why they should swim all the way to the chilly Scottish west coast. It may, they think, be due to global warming and the meals available once there.

More than 20 of the fish have been detected in recent months, and this week the Sea Life Centre, near Oban, was given a trigger found to a



Trigger fish: preys on shellfish and farm salmon

fisherman's creel off Mull. It joined several other examples being studied at the centre.

Triggers grow to about 12 inches and have erect spines on a dorsal fin with which they wedge themselves into crevices. Once they enter a creel or a salmon cage, their shape makes it difficult for them to escape.

Terry Donovan, of the Sea

Life Centre, said: "It's very unusual to find them this far north. We don't know the explanation, although there are all sorts of theories, including global warming."

Trigger fish can be found in the warmer seas off the south coast of England in summer, but tend to remain in the Mediterranean. When the presence off Scotland of the first trigger was reported, it was thought that it had become lost.

However, with so many having been seen, it is believed that they are attracted by warmer water in the North Atlantic drift. Once they arrive off western Scotland, noted for its hundreds of fish farms and lobster fisheries, it seems that there is every reason to stay.

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Hanoi acc Hong to avo

From Jonathan Doolittle
in Hanoi

BRITAIN and Vietnam yesterday signed an agreement to allow the deportation of thousands of Vietnamese boat people from Hong Kong despite fears of an national outcry if forced to be used against them.

Senior Hong Kong officials promised to do their best to avoid anything to emphasising the need for "orderly and dignified return to Vietnam". They gave a warning, however, that people would be sent with or without their consent.

British Asylum Secretary Lord Fraser said Vietnam had agreed that nobody deported under the agreement would be persecuted. He said Vietnam would continue to be a United Nations refugee camp to monitor the conditions of people sent home.

Under the agreement, only boat people arriving in Hong Kong after last night will undergo the much criticised screening process, putting the queue of 10,000 people already awaiting the process in the colony's crowded detention centres. Those thought not to be genuine political refugees could be returned to Vietnam within six weeks.

Exact arrangements for the return of the nearly 20,000 boat people already released for political refugee status over the past three years are still being worked out with Vietnam, mainly to ensure that its poverty-stricken northern provinces are not swamped.

America still

From Martin Farr

NEWS that Britain and Vietnam had agreed to the mass deportation of the Hong Kong boat people brought only a muted reaction from the Bush administration, which was what the British government had privately been pressing for.

There was no statement from either the White House or the State Department. Pressed for a reaction, spokesmen merely reiterated the long-standing American pol-

US gets of stereo

From Charles Doolittle

WITH a sea of artificial blood and fancy dress worth \$250 million, America celebrates Halloween tomorrow, a night that has leapt in the past ten years from a children's fest to an excuse for adult revelry that is close to eclipsing New Year and Christmas combined.

The Halloween mania, which last year sparked riots in Greenwich Village and has led to widespread arson in Detroit in recent years, is seen as part of a new craze for the gothic which in turn springs from a clash between America's increasingly violent, secular society and its old-fashioned conservatism.

But while the middle classes are letting off pagan steam and revelers commit



their now traditional role in the inner cities, the watchdogs of America's new ideology hope that at least the children will learn from playing with such "harmful stereotypes" as witches, ghouls and monsters.

What once seemed fun is now deemed damaging to minorities under the philosophy of the politically correct. "The Halloween image of the witch - old, ugly, wicked and dressed in black - reflects stereotypes of gender, race and age," says a teachers' manual published in Washington. This, it says, suggests that old women are evil and that the colour black is evil.

Hanoi accepts boat-people deportations

Hong Kong pledges to avoid using force

FROM JONATHAN BRAUDE
IN HONG KONG

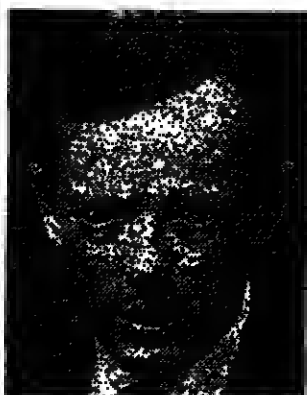
BRITAIN and Vietnam yesterday signed an agreement to allow the deportation of tens of thousands of Vietnamese boat-people from Hong Kong, despite fears of an international outcry if force has to be used against them.

Senior Hong Kong officials promised to do their best to avoid resorting to force, emphasising the need for an "orderly and dignified return to Vietnam". They gave a warning, however, that boat-people would be sent back with or without their consent.

Alistair Asprey, Hong Kong's secretary for security, said Vietnam had guaranteed that nobody deported under the agreement would face persecution. He said Vietnam would continue to allow United Nations refugee officials to monitor the conditions of people sent home.

Under the agreement, any boat-people arriving in Hong Kong after last night will undergo the much criticised screening process, jumping the queue of 40,000 people already awaiting the process in the colony's crowded detention centres. Those thought not to be genuine political refugees could be returned to Vietnam within six weeks.

Exact arrangements for the return of the nearly 20,000 boat-people already rejected for political refugee status over the past three years are still being worked out with Vietnam, mainly to ensure that its poverty stricken northern provinces are not swamp-



Asprey: camps could be cleared within three years

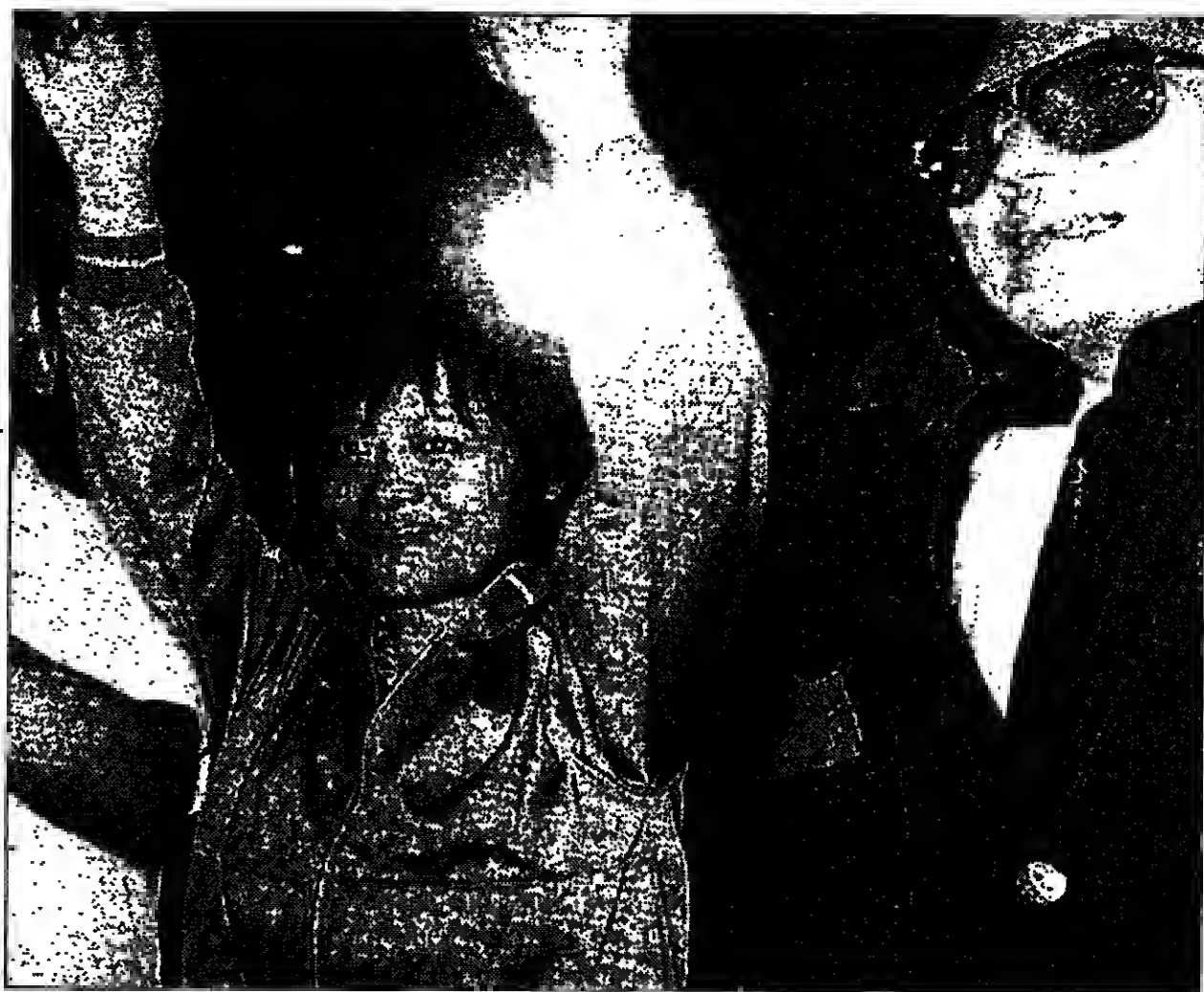
ed with people they cannot absorb. But Mr Asprey insisted Hanoi had agreed to the principle of returning them against their will if necessary. The new agreement, signed in Hanoi by Peter Williams, the British ambassador, goes further than the limited accord signed with Vietnam last week giving the go-ahead for the deportation of a small number of boat-people who have returned to Hong Kong for a second time. The Hong Kong government still hopes next month to repatriate the first of the 200 or so "double-backers" who have not volunteered to go home. Mr Asprey said he thought the whole population of the camps could be sent home over the next two to three years.

The initial number likely to be sent back is small. Since the end of the sailing season last month only a few boatloads of people have reached Hong Kong. But once the principle is established the government

hopes to tackle the population of the detention centres. Recent British lobbying in Washington has failed to budge the United States from its "total opposition" to forced repatriation, but Mr Asprey made it clear the agreement was between Britain and Vietnam and the deportations would go ahead despite American objections.

Tension has been running high in the camps since news broke last month that agreement on compulsory deportation was close, provoking fears of a return to the violence that followed the last attempt at forced repatriation in December 1989. The international outcry that propelled scared Vietnam into changing its mind.

By separating out the double-backers and any new arrivals, officials are optimistic that they can avoid trouble among the long-stayers at least in the short term, hoping that by the time the repatriation programme gathers momentum, most of them will be resigned to their fate.



Checking out in style: Xie Jun waving to spectators in Manila after becoming the women's world chess champion

Chinese becomes chess queen

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

XIE Jun, from China, has become the new world chess champion for women. By drawing the 15th game of her world chess championship challenge in Manila against the previous champion, Maya Chiburdanidze, from Soviet Georgia, Xie reached 8½ points, which in match terms was unassailable. Chiburdanidze finished on 6½.

Xie, whose 21st birthday is today, is the first postwar women's world chess champion not to come from the Soviet bloc. Indeed, she is the first Chinese chess player ever to win a world chess championship. Remarkably, she has won her world crown a year earlier than did Gary Kasparov when, in 1985, he became the youngest men's champion at the age of 22.

In the international tournament in Tilburg, The Netherlands, officially the highest-rated tournament ever, Kasparov holds the lead after nine rounds with seven points. Second place is held by the Indian, Viswanathan Anand. Britain's top-rated grandmaster, Nigel Short, is third.

America silent on deal

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

NEWS that Britain and Vietnam had agreed to the mandatory repatriation of the Hong Kong boat-people brought only a muted reaction from the Bush administration, which was what the British government had privately been pressing for.

There was no statement from either the White House or the State Department. Pressed for a reaction, spokesmen merely reiterated the long-standing American pol-

icy of opposing forced repatriation to a communist country.

American reaction to yesterday's agreement on mandatory return of refugees was crucial to its success. Washington's strong public condemnation of the forced repatriation of 51 boat people in 1989 led Hanoi to halt further involuntary repatriations, and a similar reaction this time would probably have encouraged resistance in Hong Kong's camps.

US gets to soul of stereotyping

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN NEW YORK

WITH a sea of artificial blood and fancy dress worth \$250 million, America celebrates Halloween tomorrow, a night that has leapt in the past ten years from a children's feast to an excuse for adult revelry that is close to eclipsing new year and Christmas combined.

The Halloween mania, which last year sparked riots in Greenwich Village and has led to widespread arson in Detroit in recent years, is seen as part of a new craze for the gothic which in turn springs from a clash between America's increasingly violent, secular society and its old-fashioned puritanism.

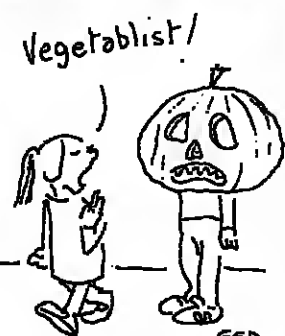
But while the middle classes are letting off pagan steam and revellers commit

The manual encourages teachers to tell children that witches were misunderstood, friendly types who helped people with herbal healing and midwifery and it suggests an essay on "good witches you know".

Ghouls such as Dracula or Frankenstein's monster are no better because they reinforce negative stereotypes about the handicapped and deformed, teachers across the country are telling their pupils. As for bats, the animal rights movement is none too happy about their negative image because the species is threatened with extinction in some places.

Do not even mention Freddy Krueger, the killer of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series and all those heroes of the pop-gothic "slasher" or "splasher" films who have recently flooded America. These are, of course, prohibited by sensitive teachers. Even such old stand-bys for little girls as princesses are none too popular since they reinforce unhealthy notions of wealth and female passivity. Thoughtful parents already know the correct answer to little boys who want to dress as violent ninjas, terminators or US Marines.

On the other side of the political fence, fundamentalist Christians are lying in wait for thoughtless toddlers who see Beelzebub behind such copywritten heroes as Casper the Friendly Ghost. And, beyond Halloween, parents are being warned of the dangers of Christmas stereotypes. A shopping centre in Colorado pioneered that field last year when it chased Santa Claus from its precinct on the ground that he represented a "negative body image". Next in line, say the experts, is the irresponsible promiscuity of the Easter bunny and the questionable psychosexual implications of Easter eggs.



their now traditional riots in the inner cities, the watchdogs of America's new ideology hope that at least the children will desist from playing with such "harmful stereotypes" as witches, ghouls and monsters.

What once seemed fun is now deemed damaging to minorities under the philosophy of the politically correct. "The Halloween image of the witch - old, ugly, wicked and dressed in black - reflects stereotypes of gender, race and age," says a teachers' manual published in Washington. This, it says, suggests that powerful women are evil, old women are ugly and that the colour black is evil.

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Shamir and al-Husseini adopt conciliatory tone on eve of Madrid peace conference

Palestinians and Israel set aside brinkmanship

From RICHARD BEESTON
IN MADRID

ISRAELIS and Palestinians appeared yesterday to abandon the game of diplomatic brinkmanship they have played over the past week. Instead displaying growing flexibility on the eve of the Middle East peace conference, Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, and Faisal al-Husseini, the most prominent member of the Palestinian delegation in Madrid, made conciliatory statements. If these are followed up in the next three days, they could provide the sort of impetus needed to make the conference work.

Speaking at a press conference, Mr al-Husseini, who is barred from attending the talks but is recognised as the leader of the Palestinian delegation, said that Palestinians would accept an interim autonomy plan in the occupied territories as long as the move would guarantee an independent state.

Although the concept of Palestinian statehood is rejected by Israel and opposed by Washington, the fact that the Palestinians are willing to compromise and to try an interim solution could signal a substantial breakthrough. Under proposals offered by the Israelis, the 1.8 million Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be granted autonomy over a five-year period, with negotiations

for a final settlement to begin after the third year. Israel envisages Palestinians enjoying some rights to elect leaders to run limited aspects of government such as education, but it refuses to relinquish its control over security-related areas such as defence and foreign policy.

Asked what Palestinians would aim for at the peace talks, Mr al-Husseini replied: "Autonomy for an interim period that will move us Palestinians from a people under occupation to a people

with full independence and a Palestinian independent state that will later join in a confederation with Jordan." He was speaking after Israel said it would not allow itself to be distracted from the peace conference by the recent of armed attacks against Israelis in the West Bank and Lebanon.

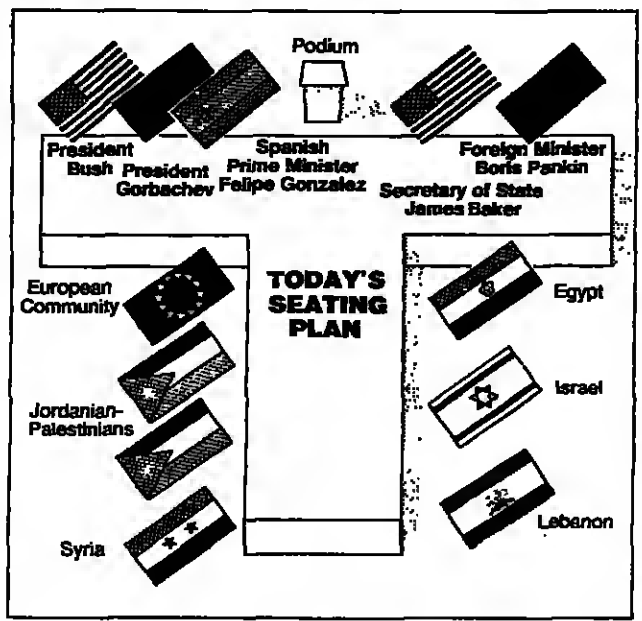
Sach Erekat, a member of the 14-member team attending the talks in a joint delegation with Jordan, said that he had "no doubt whatsoever that eventually there will be an

independent Palestinian state".

Mr Shamir, looking and sounding unusually optimistic for a leader who has until now displayed scepticism about the peace talks, yesterday emphasised the positive aspect of the conference and moderated his language when describing the violent incidents. "We do not wish to wait any longer for peace," he said before holding separate talks with President Gorbachev and James Baker, the American Secretary of State. "We truly believe that, if our counterparts have come here in the same spirit, our years of waiting will have come to an end." He described the attacks yesterday and on Monday as actions motivated by people "with a passion for blood", who had responded to recent calls to intensify attacks on Israel.

"Some might have expected, in the face of this terror, Israel would not attend the conference," Mr Shamir, who will open tomorrow's session with the first speech by the countries directly involved in the Middle East conflict, said. "But despite this violence, our quest for peace is unrelenting. We believe that all who desire true peace should unite in condemning these unspeakable acts."

Bush meets Gorbachev, page 1
Chance for peace, page 16
Diary, page 16



James Baker, the American Secretary of State who, at 61, is the arbiter ringmaster of the conference he put together in eight Middle East journeys. His goal is to keep the Arabs and Israelis talking long enough to change the climate and reach a breakthrough that still seems impossible.



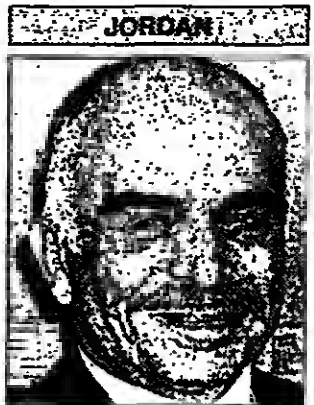
Boris Pankin, the foreign minister of the Soviet Union, the junior partner in a process being run on an equal basis with Washington in name only. The Soviet Union has too many domestic problems to play an important part, but has helped by modifying its traditional pro-Arab stance.



Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, whose decision to lead his country's delegation means compromise on the key land-for-peace issue will not be easy. A former guerrilla leader and Mossad spy-master, he believes passionately that the West Bank, as part of biblical Israel, must be retained.



Faisal al-Husseini, from east Jerusalem, is widely described as the real leader of the Palestinian delegation, but will not be at the negotiating table. In 1948 his father led Arab guerrillas against Jewish forces. Since the PLO is running the delegation, his absence is not significant.



King Hussein of Jordan, who faces the biggest problems at home because of bitter Muslim fundamentalist opposition to the talks. Kamel Abn Jaber, his new foreign minister, will represent him, and Jordan may yet be a catalyst for peace by agreeing to some form of Palestinian confederation.



President Assad of Syria, aged 61, whose dream is to regain the strategic Golan Heights. Syria, which has fought four wars with Israel and remains its main enemy, has paid lip service to the drive for an independent Palestinian state, but in reality has little love for the mainstream PLO.

Kremlin makes regional retreat

From MARY DEJEVSKY
IN MOSCOW

GORBACHEV

THE opening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, with the Soviet Union and the United States as co-sponsors, should have been a highlight of Soviet diplomacy and of President Gorbachev's career.

The call for such a conference has been a pillar of Soviet foreign policy for many years. Soviet co-sponsorship would appear to give Moscow a continuing role in the region and a say in its future. Thus, Moscow's political interests will be protected. Mr Gorbachev, moreover, will not only occupy an equal position with President Bush at the head of the table, but can claim some personal credit for persuading Moscow's Arab friends to talk to Israel.

And yet the moment of personal and national diplomatic triumph is not what it would have been even a year ago. Seen from Moscow, the Madrid conference seems very far away, and the Middle East only a little closer. Previews of the meeting occupied only a tiny proportion of the Soviet press yesterday, and those papers which did mention it gave it at most a 50-50 chance of success. Departing from Moscow's traditional pro-Arab stance, most were neutral in their analysis, noting the difficulty of reconciling the Arabs' land-for-peace policy with Israel's peace-for-peace stance. A few even took a pro-Israel line.

Part of the truth is that the significance of Middle East peace for the Soviet Union since the Cold War. Moscow's decision in side with the Western allies

against Iraq and the allied victory in the Gulf war have made regional peace almost irrelevant.

Now, as successive visits to the region by Yevgeni Primakov, Mr Gorbachev's special envoy, have shown, the Middle East for Moscow has changed from being a region in which American influence must be curbed into a potential source of economic help. The countries with which Moscow needs good relations have changed from those strong in territory and military might, Syria and Iraq, to the oil-rich states of the Gulf.

But Moscow's interest in the opening of the conference is also reduced because Moscow is hardly a superpower any more, except in terms of nuclear capability, and is scarcely running a foreign policy. Moreover, there is hardly a Soviet state to celebrate a Soviet foreign policy triumph. Most outstanding foreign political questions appear either to have been handed over to the Soviet republics, or to have been claimed by them.

Mr Gorbachev has been reticent about how he sees the future of foreign policy. His response to Mr Bush's arms control initiative was a counter-initiative and could be classified as "defence" rather than "foreign policy". His very silence on the subject suggests that his starring role at the opening of the conference and his first foray outside the Soviet Union since the August coup could be one of the last times he represents Soviet foreign policy abroad.

A tough journey in three stages

By RICHARD BEESTON

AGENDA

TODAY'S opening session of the Middle East peace conference in Madrid is the first of a three-stage process aimed at resolving the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Stage one is intended purely as a ceremonial three-day event, beginning today, with opening addresses by the two superpower hosts, Spain and the observers Egypt and the European Community. Tomorrow, Israel, its Arab neighbours and a delegation representing the Palestinians will each be given three-quarters of an hour to set out their positions before the negotiations start.

The second stage, which is due to begin early next week, will open the first bilateral talks between Israel and her traditional foes, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians. The Arab states offer to recognise Israel and conclude a peace agreement with the Jewish state in exchange for the withdrawal of all Israeli forces from the territories that they currently occupy.

Syria wants the return of the Golan Heights, captured by Israel in the 1967 six-day war. The Palestinians seek to create a state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab east Jerusalem. Beirut wants the withdrawal of all Israeli forces from the so-called security zone in southern Lebanon.

Israel has refused to withdraw from these territories. Instead, it offers Syria peace for peace with no land concessions, and the 1.8 million Palestinians in the occupied territories semi-autonomy. It has pledged to withdraw from Lebanon only when its security needs along the border are satisfied, and Syria and all other foreign forces have also pulled out of the country.

Stage three, due to begin in two weeks, is intended to tackle pressing regional problems such as water resources and arms control and will include participants from Egypt, which has already made peace with Israel, and the Arab Gulf states, who do not share borders with Israel but have maintained a state of belligerency. But it is still not clear whether Syria and some key Arab participants will attend the multi-national final stage of the talks unless progress is made in phase two.

Paris: France said yesterday it was sending a special representative to the Madrid conference (John Phillips writes).

The foreign ministry named the envoy as Bernard Badolet, its deputy director for North Africa and the Middle East. A spokesman said that France, supported by Italy, had insisted that a representative of each of the 12 EC member countries should accompany the Dutch delegate who is representing the community.

Jean-Francois Deniau, the deputy president of the foreign affairs commission in the national assembly, earlier described France's absence from the conference table as a "great setback for French diplomacy". France's exclusion from the peace talks marked the "obliteration" of the country on the Middle East diplomatic scene, according to M Deniau.

Roland Dumas, the foreign minister, said Paris would participate directly at the Madrid conference if the French were required to use their close links to the region.

I'm speechless

Claire Ryan never expected her husband to clip an eternity ring on her finger. But a romantic impulse got the better of Nick and his Abbey National Investment Account allowed him to do just that, with one of his two free annual withdrawals.



ABBEY NATIONAL

The habit of a lifetime

West Bank show goes live

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli deputy foreign minister and media darling, discovered to his dismay yesterday that he can no longer take for granted his title of champion television personality of the Middle East.

"Bibi", as he is known in Israel, has not lost any of his looks, nor his mastery of the TV "sound bite", which transformed him during the Gulf war from a junior minister into an international celebrity. Rather, the Arabs have a secret weapon: an ordinary looking, middle-aged, Palestinian mother of two from Ramallah on the West Bank. Yesterday, Hanan Ashrawi, a Christian Palestinian and professor of English literature at Bir Zeit University, began the first of many interviews planned for this week and aimed at turning the Middle East

conflict into something of a television duel against the Israeli side.

Israeli officials are confident that Mr Netanyahu will remain on top in the debate. "No one can beat Bibi at this game; that is why he is here today," said one diplomat. However, Mrs Ashrawi's firm but reassuring manner, her articulate and unemotional arguments, her sense of humour, and sensible suits may be more in tune with the mood of Madrid than the more pugnacious style of her Israeli rival.

The propaganda battle is not the only aspect of Madrid where the Israelis appear to have come off second best. They also seem to have lost the first round to the Arabs in the allocation of hotels.

Senior delegates from Syria and Egypt have been put up at the Ritz, the

Americans are at the famed Palace Hotel, and the Lebanese, in characteristic fashion, have installed themselves at the most exclusive hotel in the city, the Santo Mauro. The Palestinians and Jordanians, while not enjoying similar luxury, none the less have been housed in Ernest Hemingway's old haunt, the Hotel Victoria.

The Israelis, with their special security needs, have been located away from the other delegations at the Princess, a modern concrete establishment that looks custom-built to withstand all manner of attack. However, it will hardly give the Israelis a good opportunity to enjoy the city.

The Soviet delegation faces very different financial problems, which it is hoped might be smoothed over by American and Spanish generosity.

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Four die in southern Lebanon combat as Jew and Arab again rehearse long-standing hatreds

Hezbollah vows 'day of wrath'

FROM ADAM KELLNER
IN BEIRUT

ON THE eve of the Madrid Middle East peace talks, Jews and Arabs yesterday did battle as usual in southern Lebanon, where four people died in combat. Among the dead were three Israeli soldiers. Fifteen people were wounded, including five Israeli troops.

The three soldiers died when a bomb planted at the side of the road exploded as they drove past in an army vehicle. The incident, north-west of the town of Marjayoun, was the second of its kind in less than ten days. The five injured soldiers were ambushed by Lebanese gunmen in a separate incident only two miles from the Israeli border in the early hours.

According to an army spokesman, shoulder-fired missiles and anti-tank grenades were fired at the patrol before the Israelis returned fire. In the ensuing battle, which lasted several hours, two gunmen were killed and another was captured. Israel said they belonged to a faction of Islamic Jihad and had intended to attack a civilian target in Israel.

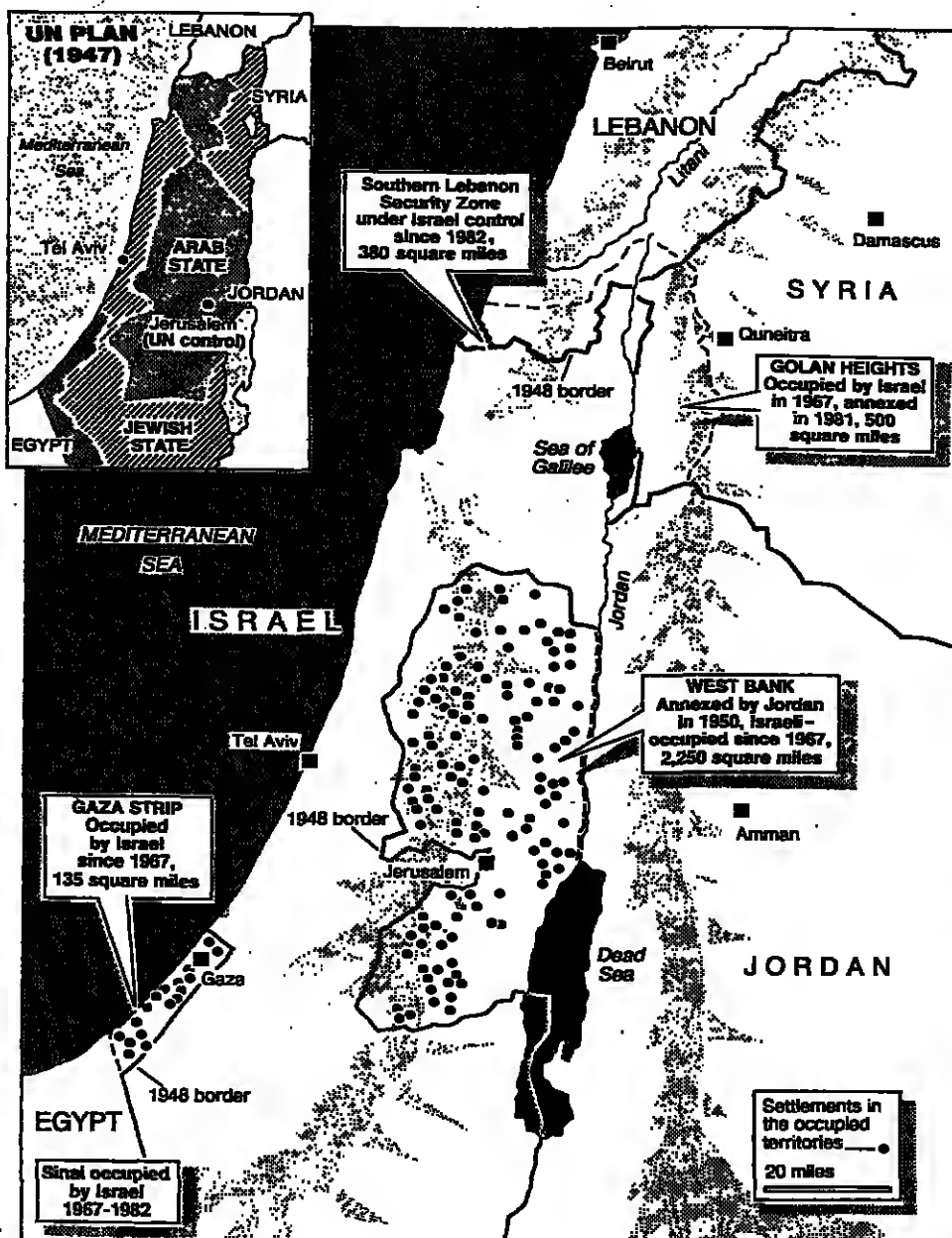
In Beirut yesterday, Sheikh Abbas Musawi, the secretary-general of Hezbollah, said there would be more guerrilla attacks to mark today as a

"day of Islamic wrath" and to demonstrate his Iranian-backed group's fervent opposition to engaging in any peace talks with Israel.

In the run-up to the peace conference, there have been at least six attacks on the Israelis and their militia allies in the past eight days, and one Israeli air raid. On Monday night, gunmen from a Palestinian extremist group opened fire on a busload of Jewish settlers in the West Bank, killing two and wounding six. The attacks are a clear indication that the Middle East's guns will not be silent while the Arab and Israeli negotiators meet across the negotiating table in Madrid.

One Israeli official yesterday laid some of the responsibility for the attacks on the Syrian and Lebanese governments which, he said, wanted to scuttle the Madrid talks. The unidentified official, quoted on the Voice of the South, a radio station run by Israel's proxy militia force, accused Syria of giving the go-ahead to guerrillas based in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa valley to attack Israel.

Conor Cruise O'Brien, page 16



Years of conflict shape political landscape

CHRONOLOGY

TODAY'S opening of the Middle East peace conference in Madrid marks a considerable achievement in bringing together Israelis and Arabs in an attempt to resolve a conflict which began in earnest after the second world war and has progressed and hardened over the years:

1947: Abortive United Nations plan for the partition of Palestine after Arab-Jewish strife under the British Mandate, which began in 1922 after Britain's victory over Ottoman Turkey, until the dominant Middle East power. British position increasingly untenable as Zionist immigration to Palestine in wake of Nazi persecution in Europe heightens Arab-Jewish conflict.

1948: Britain gives up mandate. State of Israel created and immediately attacked by Arab forces in the Arab-Israeli war, ending in 1949 with Israel in control of the coastal strip, the south and the north, Jerusalem divided and Jordan in control of the West Bank. Palestinians flock to West Bank and Jordan. Arabs claim they were expelled; Israel says they fled.

1956: Suez war, involving Egypt, Israel, Britain and France, ends in UN ceasefire. Israel gained, then gave back Sinai and Gaza.

1964: Creation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, recognised ten years later at the Arab summit in Rabat as the sole legitimate representative

of the Palestinians. PLO wages "armed struggle" against Israel.

1967: Six-day war waged by Egypt, Jordan and Syria against Israel ends in Israeli victory, with Israel gaining control of the whole of Jerusalem and occupying the West Bank (Jordanian), Sinai and the Gaza Strip (Egyptian) as well as the Golan Heights (Syrian, with a UN buffer zone). Further flood of Palestinian refugees. Golan Heights annexed by Israel in 1981.

1970: King Hussein of Jordan expels the PLO after bitter street fighting, dubbed "Black September". PLO finds new base in Lebanon.

1973: Yom Kippur war breaks out when Egypt attacks Israel on its day of prayer and fasting. Initial Egyptian success followed by Israeli counter-attack, ending in UN ceasefire and inconclusive Geneva peace talks. Israel's 1967 territorial gains unchanged.

1977: President Sadat of Egypt makes historic trip to Jerusalem. Camp David peace accord negotiated by Sadat and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, with President Carter mediating, ending in the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979. Second part of Camp David, on Palestinian self rule, never implemented.

1978: Israeli incursion into Lebanon across the Litani river to root out Palestinian gunmen.

1982: Israeli invasion of Lebanon in Operation Peace for Galilee, ending in 1985 with PLO expulsion to Tunis, as Israeli withdrawal, and the establishment of an Israeli-controlled "security zone" in southern Lebanon as a buffer against attacks.

1987: Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, the intifada, begins in the Gaza Strip and swiftly spreads to the West Bank.

1988: PLO for the first time acknowledges Israel's right to exist and renounces terrorism, although acts of terror by splinter groups continue.

1989: Yitzhak Shamir, Israeli prime minister, formulates Israeli plan for Palestinian autonomy. America seeks to use that as basis for renewed peace process, but also founders on problem of Palestinian representation and the question of Jerusalem.

1991: In the aftermath of the Gulf war against Iraq, during which Israel suffers Scud attacks but refrains from retaliation, America builds on new regional alignments and changed Soviet role to persuade Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel to attend a peace conference in Madrid, with a Palestinian team acceptable to Israel forming part of the Jordanian delegation. The PLO is formally excluded.

Richard Owen, page 16

Democracy in Africa

Mudslinging blots out issues in Zambia poll

By OUR FOREIGN STAFF

CAMPAIGNING has become more intense and dirtier in advance of tomorrow's election in Zambia, its first multiparty poll to 27 years.

Real issues have taken a back seat as President Kaunda, aged 67, and Frederick Chiluba, of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy, his main rival, have engaged in increasingly bitter mudslinging. Dr Kaunda has depicted the rival party as "a bunch of crooks". To reinforce his point, on Sunday he released a list of 25 people, three of them opposition candidates, implicated in drug dealing six years ago. The opposition has retaliated with attacks and innuendo aimed at the president's family.

Prime-time television alternately screens images of the diminutive but imperious Mr Chiluba, immaculate in Italian suits, and the greying president exhorting his countrymen to "vote for your tested leadership". But, as the articulate Mr Chiluba has pointed out, there are real policy differences between Mr Kaunda's United National Independence Party and his own, which draws support from the unions, businesses and others in urban areas, says it favours a free market economy, is opposed to subsidies and spoon-feeding the masses, and wants to privatise even Zambia's mainstay mining

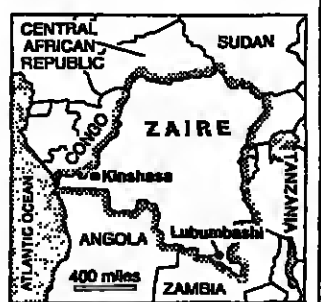
sector and attract foreign investment. For lack of any alternative, the governing party over the past few years has reluctantly yielded to International Monetary Fund and World Bank pressure to liberalise the economy, which has been in decline since the fall in copper prices in the early 1970s.

Door nations abruptly cut off aid when Zambia defaulted on a World Bank arrears payment last month, and any future Lusaka administration will have to work hard to restore confidence among donors. A Zambian economic analyst said: "There are tough decisions that have to be made and little room for manoeuvre."

In a nation of eight million people, heavy state intervention in the economy has led to a huge foreign debt and chronic shortages of even such basics as maize meal. A snap survey in the streets of Lusaka revealed that the Movement for Multiparty Democracy commands a clear majority among voters.

At least 300 candidates are contesting the 150 parliamentary seats in a first-past-the-post race. There are 2.9 million registered voters out of a population of 7.8 million. A presidential candidate needs 51 per cent of the total vote to win.

Political analysts expect the Movement for Multiparty Democracy to sweep the heavily urbanised Copperbelt and Lusaka areas. But they say a question mark hangs over the traditionally conservative rural vote and the choices women voters will make. Diplomats and political analysts



Belgium ignores Mobutu

By SAM KILEY

BELGIUM has ignored President Mobutu's demand to withdraw troops from Zaire and has sent in an extra 100 soldiers to help with the final exodus of foreigners from Kinshasa, the capital, and ten regional collection points.

About 750 Belgian and 150 French troops, supervising the evacuation of expatriates who stayed on after rioting and looting broke out at the end of September, have been ordered to leave.

Zaire's opposition movement, the Sacred Union, yesterday called on the United Nations to send a "buffer force" to maintain order, but rejected a Belgian plan to ask the Organisation of African Unity to intervene.

In Brussels, the Sacred Union said that Belgium, as the former colonial power, had a "moral and historical obligation" to use its influence at the UN to persuade other countries to contribute to a peacekeeping force.

South Africa has closed its trade mission in Kinshasa and flown its staff to Johannesburg, diplomatic sources said.

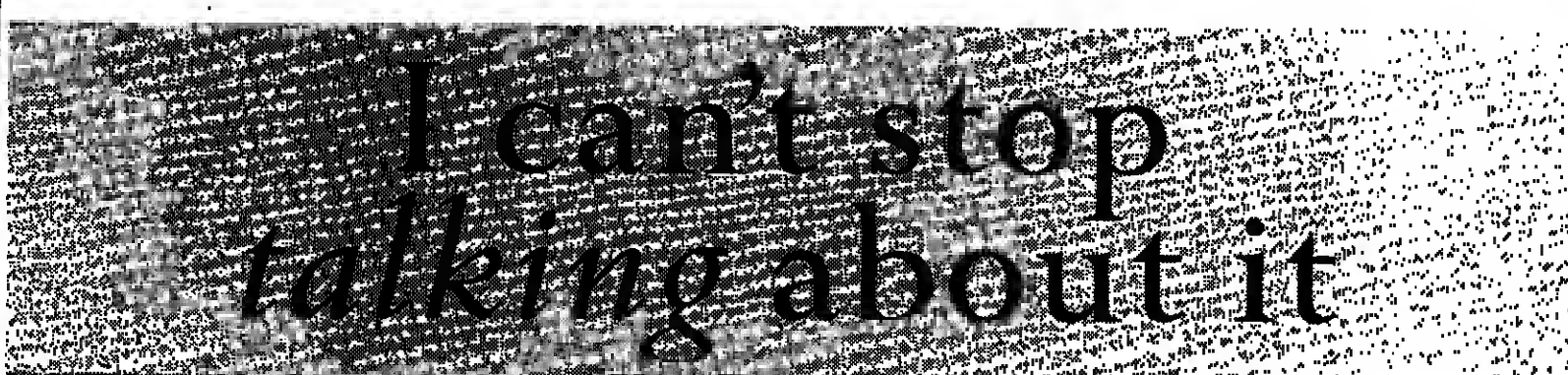
● Brussels: A Belgian paratrooper was killed and six people were injured when a grenade exploded accidentally during the evacuation of foreigners from Zaire via Rwanda, an army spokesman said yesterday. (Reuters)



Kaunda: depicting rivals as bunch of crooks

fear possible post-election violence if the United National Independence Party sweeps the board, given the popularity of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy which has attracted huge audiences at rallies.

If the Movement for Multiparty Democracy wins, it would be the first change of ruling party in the history of modern Zambia. President Kaunda declared the country a one-party state in December 1972.



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The habit of a lifetime

Western European Union talks

UK and France fail to heal defence rift

From IAN MURRAY IN BONN

BRITAIN and France failed yesterday to narrow their fundamental differences about the future shape of European defence during a special Western European Union meeting held in the government guesthouse atop the Petersberg near Bonn, where Chamberlain saw Hitler just before Munich.

The lack of progress on defining a "European defence identity" highlighted how difficult it is going to be for a

treaty on political union to be ready for signature at the European Community summit in Maastricht. The WEU meets again on November 18 when Britain wants clear guidelines for the future drawn up, although France insists that the EC summit must have the final say.

The two countries, at opposite ends of the argument over whether the EC should assume responsibility one day for European defence, largely

restated their entrenched positions. Britain insisted that Nato must be in overall charge, with America and Canada closely involved. France looked forward to the day when Europeans could take care of their own security. Germany, which had called the extra meeting in its capacity as chairman this year of the WEU, tried without any discernible success, to bridge the gap.

Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, and Tom King, the defence secretary, came seeking clarity about the WEU's future role but left feeling that the discussions had been "un-focused."

Roland Dumas, the French foreign minister, readily accepted the "primacy" of Nato at present, but said that Europeans must now start "thinking about their own security in Europe and for Europe."

Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the German minister who chaired the meeting, was happy that the need for "a European defence system" was now accepted by all and said that what had to be studied now was the role of the WEU "in a new European security architecture". Herr Genscher, however, like M Dumas, seemed to be unable to further the argument because the Franco-German initiative had been drawn up between their heads of government without prior consultation.

One diplomatic observer remarked: "It seemed that since God had spoken on this subject, the archangels could say nothing." Herr Genscher, who gave a bland résumé of the meeting to the press, nevertheless reacted strongly when asked whether there had been any talk of the WEU organising a force to operate out of Nato's area. There had been no such discussions, he said, although other delegations said that the matter had been very much part of the meeting.

According to Mr Hurd, discussions centered on the Anglo-Italian proposal for a WEU force to function outside the Nato area and on the Franco-German proposal for a WEU force to function inside the Nato area. "We want to see a clear understanding of what the links would be between the WEU and European political union and WEU and Nato," he said. That needed to be settled before we decide on a treaty. "We shall continue to press for all kinds of clarity... I believe we should reach agreement at Maastricht if we can, but not at any price."

have risen to between 8 and 200 billion roubles (up to £20 billion at the official tourist rate of exchange), depending on sources. The latest treatment for the plant is expected to add a further 2.5 billion roubles (£250 million), a bill the republic can simply not afford. Social security guarantees and job retraining will be offered to the citizens of Slavutych, a new town itself built on a radioactive hotspot which was designed to rehouse some of the 50,000 evacuees from the town of Pripyat.

"We have learned the lesson that we live communally on this planet. Chernobyl is everybody's problem and we are grateful for all the help that we receive," said Volodymyr Shovkoshyn, a deputy.

By November 15 a committee will have begun work devising alternative ways of accounting for the three per cent of the Ukraine's energy needs which were met by Chernobyl, the parliament decided, although the republic's other 12 reactors continue running.

The decision to close the plant is aptly timed, coming a month before the Ukraine's referendum on independence.



Byword for catastrophe: the Chernobyl nuclear plant

Ukraine to shut down Chernobyl

From ROBERT SEELY IN KIEV

THE Chernobyl power station, the catalyst behind the Ukraine's drive for independence and scene of the 1986 nuclear disaster whose consequences will take decades to assess, is to be shut as soon as possible, the Ukraine's parliament decided yesterday.

The vote to close the reactors, which will take 18 months, brings to an end the life of a nuclear power station whose name became a byword throughout the world for humanity's fear of nuclear power. Inside Russia, the Ukraine and Belorussia, Chernobyl epitomised the impression of secrecy which lay at the heart of the Soviet system.

Describing the power plant as "an object of extreme danger" the republic's Chernobyl commission told parliament here that it was impossible to bring the power plant in line with modern safety standards. A fire earlier this month caused a "sharp increase in social and psychological tensions in the population", according to the report.

An appeal to the United Nations is requesting help in decommissioning the reactors whose clean-up costs to date



Playtime victim: a boy, aged 12, lies critically injured in hospital in Osijek, Croatia. He was hit by shrapnel while playing in a park. His playmate was killed

Hopeful sign for Yeltsin

From MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

BORIS Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation, yesterday won a long-running battle to have Ruslan Khasbulatov, his close ally, elected chairman of the republic's parliament. The victory, announced yesterday morning after elections the previous evening, offered the first sign that Mr Yeltsin might be able to carry the Russian parliament with him in the radical reform programme he announced on Monday while also obtaining the emergency powers he is seeking.

The two deputy chairmen of parliament, Viktor Iseev and Svetlana Goryacheva, announced that they were resigning with immediate effect. Both had signed a public denunciation of Mr Yeltsin's leadership earlier in the year but had kept their positions.

Yugoslav aircraft bombard Vukovar

By DESSA TREVISAN IN BELGRADE AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

AS FIGHTING in the area reached its fiercest in recent weeks, Yugoslav fighter-bombers yesterday launched three air strikes against the eastern Croatian town of Vukovar, Croatian radio said.

The air raids came as the federal army said it would allow a fleet carrying relief supplies to dock at the besieged port of Dubrovnik. General Andrija Raseta, the deputy commander of the fifth military region, which includes Croatia, said the army reserved the right to inspect the cargo of the vessels and the belongings of passengers. Stipe Mesic, the federal president, who is a Croat, plans to be on one of the ships, General Raseta said.

In Vukovar, where about 15,000 Croats have been holding out against an army siege for two months, the town's hospital is said to be overflowing with wounded. Inter-

national relief convoys have been unable to reach the town because of the fighting.

The radio said that, in the air raids, the planes dropped 550lb and 1,000lb bombs, killing at least three people. The aircraft were reported also to have dropped bombs on a brick factory in Vinkovci.

Yesterday, Serbia called for an end to European Community peace talks on Yugoslavia and rejected threatened sanctions against the republic. On Monday the EC set a November 5 deadline for Serbia to back its plan to turn Yugoslavia into an association of sovereign republics or face unspecified economic and diplomatic sanctions. "We don't think that the talks should be continued," Vladislav Veizovic, the Serbian deputy foreign minister, said in an interview.

Thankless task, page 1

Nuclear clock takes turn for better

By NIK NUTTALL TECHNICAL CORRESPONDENT

IN A move which appears to ignore potential chaos in the Soviet Union, developments in North Korea and nuclear discoveries in Iraq, the keepers of the nuclear Doomsday Clock are to move it back from midnight to reflect what they claim is a safer world.

The famous clock, which features on the front cover of the *Chicago Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, will retreat from global nuclear war on November 26 when the December issue of the magazine is published.

The clock, designed in 1947 by Marjory Langsdorf, wife of the physicist Alexander Langsdorf, accelerated towards nuclear catastrophe during the 1980s when stalemate on arms control talks, a proliferation in the nuclear arsenal and tensions in Afghanistan, Poland and South Africa heightened concern.

Alan Lonsdale, assistant editor of the magazine, said yesterday that the board of directors and sponsors, which include distinguished nuclear scientists, would give their explanations for the optimistic move then. He would not reveal how far back the hands will be moved but said it "reflected world events" and denied that it was a publicity stunt.

This will be the fourteenth time that the clock's midnight deadline has been changed. In 1953 the time to all out nuclear war moved to 11.58pm after the United States successfully tested a hydrogen bomb.

The furthest it has stood from midnight was in 1963 when the clock was moved to 11.48pm to reflect the signing of the partial test ban treaty by the United States and the Soviet Union. It was moved to its present time, 11.50pm, last year following the end of the Cold War.

The decision to move back the clock has surprised anti-nuclear campaigners who see little cause for increased optimism. Declan McHugh of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in London said although encouraging moves continued to be made by President Gorbachev and President Bush, the number of countries on the threshold of a nuclear capability had risen to between ten and 15 including North Korea.

In addition there were serious concerns over the fate of the Soviet Union's estimated 25,000 nuclear weapons as the union fragmented. This also increased fears of terrorists gaining control of a nuclear device.

Solidarity party is in line to govern

Warsaw — The Polish communist party was level last night with the Solidarity-based Democratic Union as the final composition of the new, freely elected parliament was being worked out (Roger Boyes writes).

Even if the communists draw ahead, President Walesa is expected to ask the Democratic Union to form a coalition government. Yesterday he set out the priorities for the future government: privatisation, the recession, unemployment, security and crime.

Power sharing

Johannesburg — The government is prepared to amend the constitution to give black leaders a say in running South Africa pending a multiracial constitution. Gerrit Viljoen, minister of constitutional development, said. Parliament could make some changes but fundamental ones would need a referendum of white voters.

Temple arrest

Ayodhya — Vishwanath Pratap Singh, the former Indian prime minister, was arrested as he led 500 supporters to Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, to protest against an attempt by Hindus to take over the disputed mosque there. The authorities charged him with contravening the terms of a banning order. (Reuters)

Ciskei unrest

Johannesburg — The military government of the nominally independent Ciskei homeland, under Brigadier-General Oupa Gqozo, who seized power last year, has declared a state of emergency. It claimed that the African National Congress was fomenting terrorism and trying to destabilise it amid growing unrest. (AP)

Sanctions bite

Washington — One month after the military coup which toppled President Aristide, Haiti is about to run out of fuel, its economy is collapsing and food prices are soaring as international sanctions start to bite deep. The United States and Canada are introducing comprehensive trade embargos this week.

Test of memory

Stockholm — Four months after being found unconscious outside a bingo hall with "Joe Smith" engraved on his wrist chain, an amnesia victim has learnt who he is, police said. He is now committing his real, and more complicated, Tunisian name to memory. It is Djelassi Ali Ben Belgasam Ben Khilmi. (Reuters)

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As the Whitbread First Novel Award shortlist is announced, Nicolette Jones examines literary debuts

First ideas are often the most novel

Charles Dickens's first novel was *Pickwick Papers*, Emily Brontë's first (and only) was *Wuthering Heights*, Evelyn Waugh's was *Decline and Fall* and Kingsley Amis's was *Lucky Jim*. Even so, there are those who dismiss first novels as if they were first drafts, less likely to yield a glimpse of genius than the mature work of established names. And, increasingly, publishers are reluctant to take them on. At a time when hardback fiction hardly sells, first novels are the biggest gamble. There are no guaranteed sales to readers who loved the last book, reviews cannot always be relied upon (literary editors are often under pressure to cover known names); and most first novels sell fewer than a thousand copies.

What publishers desire most is the instant success epitomised by the industry legends, such as *Lord of the Flies*, which came out of a pile of unsolicited manuscripts in 1954. Its author, William Golding, went on to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983. Yet the 58 entries for this year's Whitbread First Novel Award show publishers are still prepared to make some brave decisions, while hoping to hit the literary jackpot.

The Whitbread judges have chosen a shortlist of five first novels, which are in the running for a £2,000 prize: the winner will be announced next Tuesday. If, as Paul Sayer's *The Comforts of Madness* did in 1988, one of these beats the competition from the other four category awards — biography, children's books, poetry and other ovals — it will win the Whitbread Book of the Year in January and a further £22,500.

This year's first novel shortlist is notable for its range, from the political to the off-the-wall. Although the judges believe their choices point towards distinguished literary careers, the selection is strong on entertainment: each, in its different way, offers laughs. Surprisingly, this includes the most controversial, Helen Zahavi's *Dirty*

Weekend (Macmillan £13.99), about a female killer who retaliates against obscene phone callers, lechers, rapists and murderers. The four other shortlisted novels are: Elspeth Barker's beautiful, delicate *O Caledonia* (Hamish Hamilton £14.99), the story of a young girl's misunderstood adolescence in a big Scottish house; Gordon Burn's *Alma Cogan* (Secker £13.99), which reinvents the Fifties vocalist as a literate observer of her scrupulously evoked times; Ivor Gound's wild, comic masterpiece *A Smoking Dot in the Distance* (Sinclair-Stevenson £14.95), described by one judge as "like a comic strip by Dickens"; and Joseph O'Connor's tale of Irish punk Eddie Virago, who takes his haircut, his guitar and his hopes of stardom to London in *Cowboys and Indians* (Sinclair-Stevenson £12.95).

'At a time when hardback fiction hardly sells, first novels are the biggest gamble'

One reason why publishers take on such books is in the hope of "building" authors, increasing sales and reputation with each book. There are, after all, plenty of instances of great careers that did not begin with a literary *Citizen Kane*. George Bernard Shaw once wrote: "I finished my first book [*Immaturity*] 76 years ago. I offered it to every publisher on the English-speaking earth I had ever heard of. Their refusals were unanimous and it did not get into print until, 50 years later, publishers would publish anything that had my name on it."

Even Shaw admits that *Immaturity* would not have made his reputation, but the best editors catch potential early. Salman Rushdie's first editor, Liz Calder, remembers publishing *Grimus* — not only Rushdie's first novel but the first book she had ever taken on. "It was a disaster for both of us. It wasn't well reviewed, and it didn't sell well." But Calder "had never read anything like it. He was clearly very gifted." The book was briefly reissued, and after Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* won the Booker Prize, it was back in print.

Calder's career did fine too; she went on to publish Julian Barnes's



Famous first: Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*, filmed with Cecil Trower, James Hayter and Jack MacNaughton

first novel, his acclaimed *Metroland* — a rite-of-passage book, like most first novels, but an outstanding one — and Anita Brookner's appropriately named *A Start in Life*. Even so, Calder, as editorial director of Bloomsbury publishers, admits that "now is not the time to do large numbers of first novels because you could go bust."

In some instances the triumphant first was also the author's only book, such as Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* (which has sold 10 million copies), or his most significant, such as J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*. Sometimes success comes to unexpected books — Kerl Hulme's *The Bone People*, for instance, which won the Booker Prize in 1985.

Some publishers try to engineer success by throwing money at commercial novels. The publisher of Sally Beauman's *Destiny* says "it was designed to be a very commercial book" and in 1987 its £341,000 advance broke records for a first novel. The tactic worked: it sold some 20,000 copies in Britain in hardback and 650,000 in paperback.

One way publishers reduce the first novel risk is by commissioning from star names (viz Stephen Fry, Ben Elton, Joan Collins). Alternatively, the writer has to have a "track record" — in journalism, for instance. Charles Dickens, for example, had attracted attention for his *Sketches by Boz*, in various journals, and publishers Chapman and Hall

approached him. *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* came out in 20 monthly instalments in 1836 and in book form the next year.

Of course, today's first-time authors also have the cinema to help them. The investment in some first novel ventures pays dividends if the film rights are sold, since films boost book sales. Among those fortunate few are Marti Leimbach's *Dying Young*, which now has Julia Roberts playing its heroine, and Josephine Hart's 1990 debut, *Damage*, in which the film rights have gone to Louis Malle. Even Dickens enjoyed screen success, albeit well after his death. *The Pickwick Papers* was turned into a film — as virtually all his novels were — where it probably reached as great an audience as his first novel did.

OPERA: WEXFORD FESTIVAL

Besieged and bewitched by rare Donizetti

Hilary Finch rediscovers a trio of unjustifiably neglected works

A rare opera which has been given a single performance somewhere in Europe within the last two decades may well be shunned as shop-soiled by the Wexford International Opera Festival, with its tireless, even obsessive interest in exhumation. Imagine the consternation, then, when it was discovered that this year's *pièce de résistance*, Donizetti's *L'assedio di Calais*, had been given a showing only last September in Bergamo, the composer's home town.

Wexford, though, need feel no great disappointment on being pipped at the post. Not only is its production only the second this century, but its status serves thrillingly to reveal that of the opera itself. *L'assedio* is one of those truly rare creatures: a neglected opera that really did not ever deserve to be overlooked.

The 1347 siege of Calais inspired Donizetti to create one of his most propulsive dramatic structures, hurled forward by robust choruses, superbly orchestrated connecting scenes, highly charged moments of recitative, and arias of extraordinary fertility. The musical ebb and flow of the chorus of citizens, the clarinet solo which opens Act II, Eleanor's own gasping cabaletta of joy which greets the English reprieve of the execution of the six noble burghers: all reveal Donizetti at the height of his powers.

As the siege itself inspired Donizetti, so his work has inspired Francesca Zambello (of the *Earls Court Opera*) to create a staging of strong simplicity. In Alison Chitty's subdued costumes of dull and ragged blues, greys and browns, crowds and individuals interrelate in firm, expressive formation within a single bare landscape. Silken banners flout out from pikes for the exterior of war; a single silken drape and candles suggest an interior.

The opera also shows Wexford casting at its best. The tiny Theatre Royal flatters the smallest and youngest of voices, but the Dublin-born mezzo-soprano Alison Browner is something else besides. Germany has heard more of her so far, though she was Covent Garden's Cenerentola last year. Her intelligent and richly expressive Aurelio (the travesty role of the Mayor of Calais's son) is the dominant memory, although this is by no means a single-star opera.

Ann Panagoulas's Eleanor, Victor Ledbetter's Mayor Eustachio and Elizabeth Woollett's Isabella of England all made their mark under the sympathetic baton of Italian *bel canto* expert, Evelino Pidò. Here, and throughout the festival, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and, in particular, the accomplished Wexford Festival Chorus, were potent *dramatis personae* in their own right.

The Donizetti was a hard act to follow. Gluck was next in line and he had to suffer the added disadvantage of being represented by an opera with both recognisable echoes of his own *Orfeo* and with blatant pre-echoes of Mozart's *Il seraglio*. The spell of far Arabia has stolen away the wits of many a composer: Gluck's *La Rencontre imprévue* (or *The Pilgrims of Mecca*) was the unashamed prototype for Mozart's harem-escape opera.

Despite a weaker, less fully developed dramatic structure (two Arab-bashing comic acts basically frame one central love-interest act), Jamie Hayes's inventive production persuaded us that this opera deserves to be enjoyed far more than as a mere template.

Richard Hickox brought out the fun of the Frenchified comic songs which chatter in between the familiar tinkling orchestral exotica and lavished care on the stately, pulsing arias of love, reminiscent of *Orfeo*. Paul Austin Kelly's Ali relished his aria of lost love which was all but a well-shuffled "Che farò". He certainly had all the notes, too, even if they lacked the changing lights and shades essential to this type of writing. Janet Williams was a melting Rezia, and Christopher Hux a resonant servant Osmin. Malcolm Walker, inflicted with the all but superfluous part of the mad French painter, Vertigo, acquitted himself with convincingly Gallic panache.

The sense of *trompe l'oeille* in the work's multifarious musical echoes was matched by the *trompe l'oeil* of Ruari Murchison's virtuoso set. He turned a pyramid inside out

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Staging of strong simplicity: Edoardo (Kurt Ollman) in *L'assedio di Calais*

and on its side and created a series of sand-yellow and burning sky-blue interiors out of its permutations.

Such purely visual flair was matched the following evening by John Lloyd Davies's self-designed production of *Der Widerspenstigen Zähmung* (or *The Taming of the Shrew*). This was the swansong of Hermann Goetz who died of tuberculosis at 35. The trouble with the opera is that while the action is comic, the score and the heavily metrical libretto are hardly side-splitting.

Lloyd Davies dominated the proceedings with sets and costumes incarnating Mondrian's colourful geometry. The effect, despite some luscious singing from the fine Finnish soprano Mari Sauramo as Katherina and William Parcher as Petruchio the shrew-tamer, was somewhat oppressive. Even Oliver von Dohnányi's obviously committed baton could not quite make a case for this year's opera number three.

HILARY FINCH

GEORGE C. SCOTT has got the new Broadway season off to a convivial start as star and director of *On Borrowed Time* (Circle in the Square Theatre). Paul Osborn's 1938 play about a grandfather who keeps Death imprisoned in an apple tree while he contrives a future for his orphaned grandson provides warm-hearted entertainment in Scott's staging. As the pipe-smoking, swearing Gramps, Scott plays all of the variations of his gruff persona. To add mellower tones, he has a fine supporting company which includes Teresa Wright as Granny.

The New York City Opera keeps reviving Broadway musicals and keeps getting better at it. Last season's *A Little Night Music* won a brace of theatre awards and was filmed for television. The company's new production of Frank Loesser's 1957 *The Most Happy Fella* is just as worthy. After his success with *Gypsy* and *Dolls*, Loesser aimed at composing a musical closer to opera, and Arthur Allan Seidman's vibrant production shows how richly Loesser moved towards aria in such songs as "My Heart is So Full of You", while preserving musical comedy tradition in

THEATRE: NEW YORK

Big Apple rosy, bar a few worms

rousers such as "Big D". Lara Tester, the dancer-singer who partnered Natalia Makarova in *On Your Toes*, leads a dynamic cast, making a welcome return to the New York stage after lecturing in theatre in California.

A sort of extended recitative occurs in *Ben Appetit*, two musical monologues for which American opera composer Lee Holby (*Summer and Smoke*, *The Tempest*) has set to music a Ruth Draper classic and a Julia Child recipe. Jean Stapleton, famed as Edith Bunker in the television series *All in the Family*, stars in the show which launches the 25th season of Off-Broadway's CSC Theatre.

Directed by Carey Perloff, with affection for the reality of both characters and the wry humour of the material, Stapleton is distractingly amiable throughout. The main character is a socialite trying to take an Italian lesson while

juggling phone calls, children, servants and a puppy. The second monologue is a recipe for chocolate cake. British audiences unfamiliar with Julia Child, a beloved television gourmet in America, should imagine Barbara Woodhouse demonstrating recipes to get the tenor of this cheerily eccentric entertainment.

THE new Variety Arts Theatre, created from an old pornography cinema, has just opened with *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. The overnight critics' response to one of the most expensive musicals in Off-Broadway history was a chorus of jeers, but the new downtown venue for this slickly mounted show gives it a better chance if good word-of-mouth from cult fans is not overwhelmed by Americans' resistance even to scrambled Shakespearean dialogue.

Two new plays about young adults with stultifying prob-

lems in the areas of mental illness, sex, drugs and relationships have similarly gloomy scenarios (all is lost) and messages (the environment's to blame), though Timothy Mason's *Babylon Gardens* is set in Manhattan and Canadian Brad Fraser's *Unidentified Human Remains* and the *True Nature of Love* takes place in Edmonton. Attractive and able casts help the modestly accomplished authors, but both shows are hard work.

Just as depressing in content, but exhilarating for the promise of its 17-year-old writer Carlotta Zimmerman, is *Man At His Best*. The one-act is one of four to win first-rate professional productions in the Foundation of Dramatists Guild 1991 Young Playwrights Festival, an event initiated ten years ago by Stephen Sandheim when he was Guild President.

Zimmerman's *Man At His Best* recalls *Kiss of the Spider Woman* in its dialogue between two caged convicts, but her variations are startlingly precocious and theatrical, and set New York's new theatrical season in a moderately positive direction.

HOLLY HILL



Warm-hearted entertainment: *On Borrowed Time* with Nathan Lane (left), George C. Scott and Matthew Purse

Silver lining?

IN ONE respect, the orchestral pay dispute that has shut the Royal Opera House is good news for the Royal Ballet. The company had announced for tonight a revival of Jerome Robbins's *Afternoon of a Faun*. That became a problem, however, when Robbins (who insists on reviving his own work) was too busy to rehearse it. The revival was shelved, leaving the company with an awkward hole in its programme; luckily, the theatre's closure gives it time to find an alternative.

Chilling choice WITH admirable speed, the Liverpool Playhouse has picked up the pieces of its autumn season, which was wrecked by the row between John Osborne and Peter O'Toole that led to the cancellation of Osborne's *Defence of a Fool*. In its place, the Playhouse is staging Susan Hill's spine-chilling novel, *The Woman in Black* — also running at the Fortune Theatre in London.

BRIEFING

Richard Todd, of *Dam Busters* and *Robin Hood* fame, stars in the Liverpool production, opening on November 13.

Arias again

GENOA's handsome Teatro Carlo Felice, built in 1828 and gutted by British incendiary bombs in 1943, has finally been reopened with a production of *Il trovatore*. A four-year reconstruction, costing £69 million, was funded by the government, the city and the Genoa-based petrol company Erg. The architect Ignazio Gardella has restored most of the original exterior, but transformed the inside with state-of-the-art computer technology, providing a revolve of four stages.

Notable chair

THE London Philharmonic took a vital step towards settling its internal dispute on Sunday when, after a seven-week impasse, the players elected a new chairman, Simon Channing. David Marcou, the previous chairman, who resigned in the summer

with four other players on the orchestral board, was chosen as deputy chairman. The deadlock was broken on the insistence of the musical director, Franz Welser-Möst, who wanted to get the orchestra's administration on an even keel before the Arts Council considers its subsidy for next year.

Last chance . . .

ENGLISH National Opera's revival of Puccini's *La Bohème* received the thumbs down when it opened in September, mainly because of a poor tenor and a strident conductor. Both have now changed. Adrian Martin makes a winning Rodolfo and Justin Brown in the pit is full of promise, though the mutilation inflicted on Jean-Claude Auvray's original production by Julia Hollander (responsible for the restaging) remains. Last performance is at the Coliseum on Friday (071-836 3161).

ARTS REVIEWS

Theatre, dance and rock
Page 20

RECORDS: JAZZ

Passing into an electric band

ANDY Sheppard moves on again. After his uncompromising duets with avant-garde pianist Keith Tippett and the sprawling big band project *Soft On The Inside*, the West Country saxophonist has entered a promising electric phase.

In Co-Motion also marks a return to a more intimate scale. With the big band, Sheppard's resources were dangerously overstretched; here, leading a quintet, he cuts a more authoritative figure. Amid the high-volume compositions, he resists the temptation to fall back on the clichés of jazz-rock. This is an abrasive and visceral set with few moments of repose, Sheppard cutting jagged lines against the backdrop provided by the keyboard player Steve Lodder. While there is still a self-indulgent streak in the saxophone solos, it is much less pronounced than in his previous studio work. As with the band's recent live dates, the one icon-

Andy Sheppard: In Co-Motion (Antilles ANCD-8768) Steve Williamson: Rhyme Time (That Fuss Was Ual) (Nerve 511235)

gruous element is Claude Deppa's trumpet. His raw aggression may give him the edge over more polished technicians, but he lacks clarity and tends to flounder whenever he enters the upper register.

Like Sheppard, Steve Williamson has become a symbol of the new British jazz. For his second album, *Rhyme Time*, he has drawn heavily on the fashionable, back-to-the-roots approach of the "M-Base" collective of Brooklyn. The connection is underlined by the presence on the two vocal tracks of the idiosyncratic singer Cassandra Wilson.

M-Base — roughly speaking, an amalgam of funk, rap and jazz improvisation — sounds intriguing in principle, less so in reality. As each theme is scrupulously diced into inter-

locking rhythmic patterns, the overall impression is one of dancers trying to move with their feet tied together.

From a technical point of view, Williamson's version stands comparison with the work of the movement's leader, Steve Coleman. He deserves credit for venturing onto this sticky territory, nevertheless the shelf-life of this album is strictly limited.

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Time for revolution at the BBC

With the BBC Charter soon under review, the government wants evidence of value for money. John Birt, director-general in waiting, explains why the Corporation is shifting to the marketplace

UNDER mounting political pressure, the BBC has begun to chip away at what is widely perceived as its massive bureaucratic edifice. Eager to assure politicians that the Corporation is as efficient as any commercial broadcaster before debate begins on the renewal of its Royal Charter, the BBC's senior management has adopted the government's favoured cure for the National Health Service. Money is now to follow BBC programmes in the same way money is supposed to follow NHS patients.

Michael Checkland, the BBC's director-general, considers that the market reforms, along with the closure of excess studio capacity to be announced next week, will help squeeze a possible £50 million out of production and overhead costs in the next four years, as the Home Office requires.

"It is a job creation scheme for accountants," says Tony Lennon, co-president of Bectu, the broadcasting union. "Many jobs will be lost in the production side, while the BBC will be forced to hire a far higher proportion of pen-pushing

bureaucrats to run the new costing system." Mr Checkland admitted yesterday that the shake-up will actually create new jobs. John Birt, his deputy who is to succeed him in 1993, was quick to add, however, that there will be a net reduction in staff. Both were adamant that the new system will wipe out the bureaucracy and free more money for programme making.

They deny that the new internal market is the first step towards privatisation. Both Mr Checkland and Mr Birt say the BBC is holding true to its public service remit by preventing BBC resource departments from soliciting business from the commercial channels. "We are asking them to break even, not make a profit," says a glossy pamphlet handed out to BBC department heads yesterday.

But the unions believe the BBC's own resource services are more cost-efficient than anything on offer outside and that the only way the BBC will meet its cost-cutting objective is to axe them, thereby limiting producer choice.

MELINDA WITTSTOCK



Charity begins at home: a scene from the BBC's *The Men's Room*, the kind of programme which in future may be made outside the BBC

From April 1993 television to the BBC will be organised on the basis of a system we are calling Producer Choice. This system should ensure that the whole business of programme-making at the BBC will become at least as efficient as any of our competitors in independent and satellite television.

From April 1993 we will cease to fund almost all BBC activity direct from the top. Rather, programme departments (such as drama, entertainment and sport) and producers will hold the funds. They will be free to buy facilities for their programmes — studios, outside broadcast units and so on — from inside and outside the BBC.

Studios, outside broadcasts, graphics and film departments, the facility providers, will compete for business — their funding dependent on their ability to attract business from BBC producers on grounds of quality and price.

Producer Choice will bring great benefits:

- It will put programmes first
- It will give programme makers the prime responsibility for spending programme funds — for controlling the whole of a programme's true cost
- With money to spend — rather than facilities to bid for — programme makers should spend money more wisely and we should see greater value for money on the screen

- and with choice about where to spend their budgets, programme makers should be able to buy resources of the quality they need at the best price — and again we should see the value on the screen.

Producer Choice will also:

- expose our programme makers to new ways and methods of working
- and it will give programme makers greater opportunity to assemble teams of their choosing — including, where they wish,



Birt: rules of competition

creative people and technicians of talent from outside the BBC.

The role of facility providers will change. They will compete for resource business within the BBC — improving and developing their services, and marketing them to maximise business — rather than working to plans provided by others. Facility providers too will have greater freedom over their own affairs. They will be free to set their prices — their first objective to break-even.

There will be few constraints. One, however, is clear: we want to invest the licence fee in programmes for our viewers and listeners. We want to set the level of BBC resources only in order to service BBC programmes.

True marginal capacity — capacity still unsold, still available just hours or days before the due date — may be sold to outside producers. But capacity in a resource unit should not be set with anything in mind other than competing for BBC production.

We call the system "Producer Choice". But it could as easily — if less ringingly — be called user choice. Because behind Producer Choice is the idea that wherever possible in the BBC we want to simplify and clarify relationships: cut out bureaucracy; devolve power; design the system around customer-supplier relationships,

with the customer as fund-holder.

Facility providers are customers too. We will move wherever possible — and we want to see the bare minimum excluded — to give resource providers discretion over their spending decisions — the services they buy.

Programmes and facility providers will have to carry all the costs that independent producers and facility houses outside the BBC also have to bear. Everyone in the BBC will be charged:

- a rent for the accommodation and space they use;
- the cost of the capital they employ — the capital tied up in facilities, for example;
- a share of all overheads — excluding only the cost of governance, of transmitters, and of assembling and promoting the network schedule.

All users will have an incentive:

- to use the minimum of space;
- to use the minimum of capital they can be sure of recovering through the sale of their services;
- to see overheads brought down to an effective but competitive minimum.

BBC resource providers will

want these fixed costs reduced because they will be under pressure to keep the prices they charge for facilities — their rate cards — competitive with outside facilities. We plan an overhead initiative — involving both customers and suppliers — to reduce overheads to a minimum by April 1993; and by April 1994, we shall devise and institute systems to ensure that every overhead function has a direct price relationship with its customers — with overhead services ideally being paid for item by item, or by voluntary subscription.

But for resource providers to be competitive — for unit costs to be low — managers must also ensure that their plant and facilities are heavily utilised; and that their productivity matches best industry practice for work of quality. As with overheads, we plan a

productivity initiative so that resource providers — but also programme controllers and the centre — can inform themselves just what best industry practice is. Funding for programmes will be based on best industry practice.

As for the utilisation of plant — studios, outside broadcast units and so on: we have more plant and facilities than we will need in 1993 when 25 per cent of programmes will be made by independents. The Regional and Network Television Directorates plan to announce specific capacity reductions shortly. That surplus capacity will be reduced by April 1993. After that date plant utilisation rates will be high.

We will reduce in-house capacity not to match in-house demand, but to come just below it. This is to ensure a smooth launch for Producer Choice. If surplus capacity

were not removed before Producer Choice is launched, there would be adverse consequences: money would leave the BBC as some BBC producers purchased outside facilities; and a similar sum would be needed to finance the losses of BBC facility providers unable to sell the facilities that BBC producers had vacated.

The BBC would thus pay twice over; and money would be wasted rather than spent on programmes. Alternatively, there would be sudden dislocation as BBC resource providers quickly reduced their costs to ensure that they met their break-even targets.

All advice is that to ensure Producer Choice works smoothly when it is instituted, we should have a reduced level of capacity, a competitive overhead structure and productive working methods.

Carefully managed actions over the next 16 months will avoid a crisis later.

The only other significant constraint on choice is the over-ride. In exceptional circumstances — if, for example, our producers flocked away from a particular resource — the Director-General may agree to over-ride Producer Choice and to oblige BBC producers — for a finite period (not exceeding 6 months) — to use the facility in question.

If it is used, it will only be to give senior managers, and the facility in question, time to establish why the resource is not competitive — whether on grounds of quality or price — and time to take action to adjust, so that a break-even target may then be achieved.

I do not expect the over-ride to be used. The quality of craft skills

in the BBC sets the industry standard across the world. Craft skills are as integral a part of the success of BBC programmes as other creative skills.

Provided the price is right the BBC will retain a substantial craft skills base — not because of any central diktat — but because BBC programme makers will find that the BBC facility providers offer unmatched quality. The exact size of our resource base, though, will be determined by the scale of the demand, for BBC craft skills from BBC producers.

The main benefit of Producer Choice is the greater freedom it will give producers to make key decisions about their programmes. But there are other benefits.

Producer Choice should invigorate the management of the BBC — ensuring greater clarity of role and responsibility; and far wider discretion. Producer Choice will bring clear information about the full, total cost of our programmes; and about the precise cost of our records.

We will have unarguable information with which to persuade a sceptical world — and those who will scrutinise us keenly during the Charter Renewal process — that in a new era of Channel 3 publisher-contractors and a growing independent facility sector, the BBC is at least as efficient as any of its competitors. With Producer Choice, the jibes about overmanning will end. We shall have a programme-driven BBC, with a lean and competitive resource base — but a BBC still very much a centre of craft excellence.

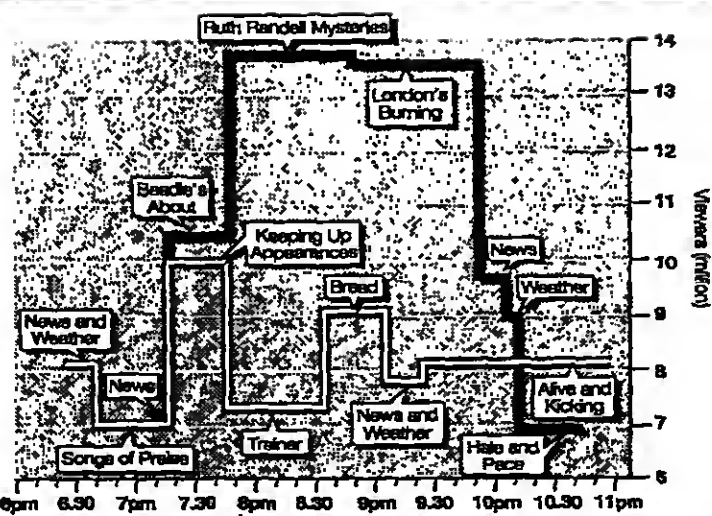
HOW INSPECTOR WEXFORD WOOS VIEWERS FROM THE BBC

Successful scheduling is the key to the battle for audiences.

The *Ruth Rendell* series, produced by TVS, not only achieved a high audience in its own right, but it also lifted ITV's Sunday night ratings right through to the late ITN news. At the same time *Trainer*, the BBC's new series, has collapsed against *Ruth Rendell* and has had the effect of dragging subsequent BBC offerings down.

However, the BBC still has one option — it could buy the TVS series.

In the chart (right) BBC viewing figures for October 13 are shown in white, ITV in black. Source: BARB/ABC Media



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WHICH?



Deirdre Sanders

DEIRDRE SANDERS, 34, is the widow of a man who died in a car crash. She is now a widow and is looking for a new partner.

She is a widow and is looking for a new partner. She is a widow and is looking for a new partner.

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Virginia Ironside, an agony aunt for 12 years, on the questions no one can resist asking her

How do you survive the agony?

I imagine the scene. My neighbour has just had a new baby and her partner has thrown a party to celebrate. I arrive, fluffy taddy in hand, eager to chuck the little chap under the chin.

But just as I am about to plunge through the fray to deliver my gift, my way is barred by a big, beaming, red-faced man in a blazer.

"Brother-in-law," says the blazer, holding out his hand for a shake. "Let me get you a drink."

"Thanks — I must give this present to..."

"Great night for a party," he says. "Having a good time?"

"Yes."

"So," he says, "And what do you do for a living?"

"I'm a journalist."

"Oh! Better watch what I say, eh?"

Should never have said I was a journalist. Should have learned by now.

"So what do you scribble, then? Women's stuff? Political stuff?"

"I answer people's problems."

"I should have never said that. I should have..."

"Ah! The agony aunt! They told me about you!"

His expression is pure victory. "How absolutely fascinating!"

"It is. And what do you do?"

"You must get an awful lot of letters!"

"Yes, but what do you do?"

"But isn't it terribly depressing?"

Sighing, I lean against the wall and begin. "Not a bit," I say, looking surreptitiously at my watch. The baby will still be around in an hour, surely. "Get me a drink and let me explain."

People often ask me if I don't get fed up with people bearding me at parties (as apparently they do to doctors) and telling me their problems. In fact, the question most people ask me at parties is whether I get fed up with people bearding me at parties telling me their problems. And the answer is that they don't. They do ask me questions though, here are some of the favourites:

Surely it's only very stupid people who write in?

I have letters from anyone you can think of. Head teachers and children, health workers and prostitutes, doctors and prisoners, black and white, letters from wealthy people and broke people.

The letters come on paper with embossed addresses, on the backs of envelopes, on office invoice slips or, saddest of all, they come depressed and suicidal on paper that has a cheery Snoopy at the top.

There are crazy letters in green ink from crazy people, there are shaky letters from the elderly and there are dreadful wonky letters in unformed writing from people I

always hope have not put their address at the top.

A lot of us would rather die than put all our private thoughts on paper, and then pop them in the post to a complete stranger. How can people be sure that their letters aren't opened by secretaries who pass them round the office screaming with laughter?

The truth is they can't — and it shows what an extraordinary amount of trust people have in agony aunts that they will write very intimate things to them — things which are often shocking, libellous, not to mention sometimes illegal.

There's a great deal to be said for writing letters. You can write as long as you like, and moan to your heart's content. And of course one of the reasons people write in is because they know they will get a personal reply back, even if their letter doesn't appear on the page.

arrived at the *Sunday Mirror*, where at least half the letters I get are from men.

Their main worries are sex, bereavement, loneliness and divorce. My one-time editor at *Woman*, Jane Reed, always used to say, the men wrote in with only three questions: "How big, how long and how often?" They preceded most of their queries rather sweetly, with the words: "I hope you don't mind me, a mere male, writing, but..." and then went on to ask how big, how long or how often.

I bet you get some pretty filthy stuff, don't you?

Yes, I do, and some pretty sad stuff as well. A large proportion of the letters that come in are about sex but most are surprisingly humdrum. One of the advantages of a problem page as far as sex goes, is that it is far, far easier to write rude than speak rude.

I once attended a Marriage Guidance Council (as it then was) sex workshop (yes, workshop) on a training weekend. A tremendously

upper-class white-haired old marriage guidance lady in sandals led a discussion on sex for a variety of trainees, from church counsellors to personnel officers. "Now, let's be frank and discuss sex!" she boomed. "I'm going to say a word to each of you and you must all describe it in detail."

Luckily I'd already got my glib froot up and could talk suavely about "G-spots", "vaginal walls", "lubricating jelly", "prostate glands", not to mention "penile thrusting", with ghastly frankness. They had to shut me up.

But one woman who was called on to describe "testicles" (and give other names for them) was beside herself when she had to reveal to us all that she had never seen her husband's "thing" let alone "things" because they always turned the light out when they made love.

This got rather disapproving looks from the counsellors but I thought, why not? I recently had a letter from someone who complained about his wife being terribly tense and hung-up because she insisted on having the light on all the time when they made love so she could see exactly what he was up to.

My aim is always to make sex seem less rather than more important. I do this because whenever I read a sex-book that is bursting with drawings of couples in extraordinary positions I always feel like a dreadfully dismal Jane.

When I read a book that says that the vast majority of couples favour the missionary position, that a survey shows women (or men) don't rate sex high as an essential in the relationship, then I put the book down feeling like Brigitte Bardot. Compared to these dreary, dull couples I

seem a right little raver.

The problem page does attract its fair share of eccentrics. Quite often I'll get a letter that appears perfectly normal on page one, slightly bizarre on page two, while page three finds the writer dressed up as a waitress with a nappy on. Those who write this kind of letter rarely give their address and I guess they get a big thrill from writing down their fantasies and posting them off to me.

Agony aunts also get letters from people with problems that have got nothing to do with the page. Marje Proops of the *Daily Mirror* has been asked: "We're coming to London next week. Can you suggest a show and a restaurant where we can take my mother?" She was even asked by one woman where she could "get felt in Manchester". Marje replied: "You can get felt anywhere if you put your mind to it."

But she added a PS giving the name of a department store and advising the woman not to walk in saying: "Where can I get felt here?"

What is the point of an agony aunt?

Agony aunts are seen variously as eccentrics, busy-bodies, well-meaning amateurs, experts and, I often suspect, con-artists.

The press have a mixed view of us. Bernard Levin, wrote of Marje Proops: "I cannot see how anybody... can be so in any doubt that she does an enormous amount, possibly — of direct, practical good, at any rate — more than any other single individual in the country."

The writer Julie Burchill, however, is not so generous. One of the many gripes she gave vent to in a piece in the *Sunday Times* was that we dispense a "cartload of clucking, smug, chuckling and nudge-nudge advice... There is," she concluded, "just no excuse for them."

"We will always be a joke", Marje Proops once wrote. "But no point in whingeing about it. Who cares, really, as long as our readers continue to take us seriously and we are around when someone writes: 'I'm desperate and I don't know what to do or where to turn. Please, please help me...'"

© Times Newspapers Ltd 1991

Extracted from *Problems! Problems! Virginia Ironside to be published tomorrow by Robson Books (£14.95)*

HEATHER KIRBY

'A large proportion of the letters that come in are about sex but most are surprisingly humdrum'

What I want to know is, how many of the letters are hoaxes?

Agony aunts learn to spot hoaxes. A hoax letter is often written in a childish hand and purports to be from a teacher. One letter I got read: "Dear Virginia, I have a problem. I am a gym mistress and a lesbian. I have no friends. I am very lonely because everyone hates me and to make things worse I have smelly armpits."

Smelling more a rat than an arm-pit, I sent off my standard letter which says: "Dear Reader, Sometimes we have to reassure ourselves that someone has actually sent a letter. Will you please write back to confirm that you indeed did send me a letter that you wished answered?"

Two days later the phone rang and a furious voice boomed: "I have never sent you a letter in my life! It was the gym mistress. It must be one of my pupils. Will you please send it back to me so that I can bring the culprit to justice."

And men, do they ever write to you?

When I was agony aunt at *Woman* magazine I only got a few letters from men. Barely 52 men actually wrote in each year. And if they did, the questions were invariably about sex. But the idea that men don't express their feelings or write in for help was completely disproved when I



Position of trust: people will write things which are often shocking, libellous, not to mention illegal, Virginia Ironside says

AND BRIEFLY

Famous mistakes

WE ALL do it, and so do celebrities. On Saturday, the fashion mistakes of the famous will be sold in aid of the Terence Higgins Trust, the Aids charity, as part of the Fashion Acts initiative. The Edina Ronay suit Julie Walters said she could not ride her bike in, the mauve-grey Jean-Paul Gaultier trouser suit, to which, Kim Wilde confesses, "something must have happened between the shop and when I got home", the emerald green Azzedine Alaïa jacket that Natasha Richardson says was "an impulse buy, but not me", and the mismatched suit bought for a television appearance by Holly Johnson of Frankie Goes To Hollywood, will be among the items on sale for from £10. Admission to the sale, at the Danceworks Studio 5, 16 Balderton Street, London W1, from 10am until 6pm, is a "minimum donation of £1".

Tops for cooks

TOP cooks will demonstrate their favourite recipes at the BBC Good Food Cooking & Kitchen Show at the National Exhibition Centre, near Birmingham International Airport and railway station, from November 7-10. Jobo Tovey will flambé venison, Josceline Dimbleby will make puddings and Prue Leith some "easy pleasey" meals, while Raymond Blanc, proprietor of Le Manoir aux Quat Saisons, will show "how to prepare the finest ingredients and achieve the best results with them". Admission is £6.50 or £5.50 if booked in advance. Telephone 021-780 4133.

Ghoulish fun

HALLOWEEN is spookiest at a (preferably haunted) stately home. Festivities arranged by the National Trust tomorrow include a Haunted House Hunt at Lyme Park, Cheshire, from 6.30 to 8pm (tel: 0663 762 023), ooc at Florence Court, near Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland (tel: 036-582 249), and at Tattershall Castle, Tattershall, near Lincoln, from 7pm to 9.30pm (tel: 0526 42543).

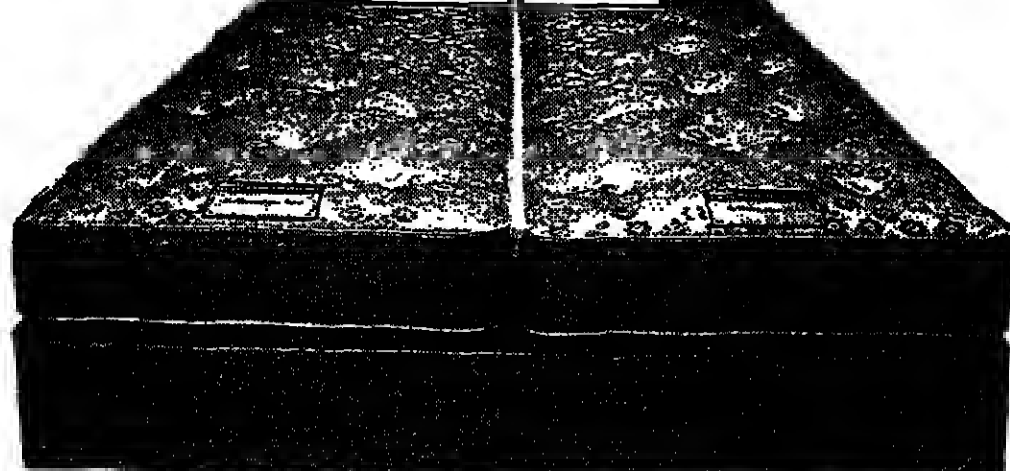
VICTORIA MCKEE

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ORTHOPAEDIC & MEDIBEDS

WHICH QUESTIONS ARE ASKED THE MOST?



Deidre Sanders



Claire Rayner



Angela Willans



Phillip Hodson

DEIDRE SANDERS. *The Sun*: "The bedrock problem is lack of confidence. Not being able to talk to someone you're in love with about how you feel."

"Socially, the problem I have to deal with most often is people always saying 'go on, admit it, you make the letters up. They are not all true.' In reality I am overwhelmed by letters and I couldn't possibly make them up they are so full of bizarre events."

CLAIRE RAYNER. *TV-am*: "The main problem is that people don't listen to each other and don't talk enough. The main problem I have socially is being recognised. Wherever I go people stop me and think I have an answer to their problem. I have given up travelling by Tube, because it is so noisy people felt they could confide in me,

and it is amazing how often taxi drivers refuse my money because they have enjoyed a natter about their families."

ANGELA WILLANS. *Woman's Own*: "Loneliness is the chief problem. People say: 'I have no one to love me and I never go out.' As soon as people find out what you do, they say 'you make up all the letters don't you?' They are absolutely certain and won't believe you get hundreds of letters a week."

SUE FROST. *Woman*: "How can I get him back? is the question I am most often asked. And socially the thing I am asked most is, what qualifications do you have? As if there were a school that turns out agony aunts ready made with worldly wisdom. Would it were so."

"Certainly, you are aware of a great deal of tragedy out there. And

there is a certain relentlessness about it, the same problems go on and on. You get the feeling of shoals of woe."

PHILLIP HODSON. *Agony uncle of Family Circle and Fast Forward* magazines, and at BBC's *People Today* programme: "The ageing of the population is causing most problems. Essentially it is a middle-aged feeling which encompasses depression, alienation and anxiety, a mid-life crisis."

"Socially, my biggest problem is coping with people's high expectations. When they meet you, people seem to think you have x-ray vision and can see into their soul. I have just had lunch with a woman who asked if at the back of my brain I am analysing people's motives all the time."

HEATHER KIRBY

Three writers give sharply differing views on today's talks between sworn enemies

What hope for Middle East peace?

Amos Oz, the Israeli novelist, hails a breakthrough, with the Arabs at last recognising his state's right to exist

Israel is entering today into direct negotiations with all its neighbours and with the Palestinian people. The object of these negotiations is to put an end to seventy years of war between Jews and Arabs and to inaugurate a new age. In due course, the peace talks will lead to regional arrangements and a picture of a shared future: frontiers and security, water and trade, energy and pumps, tourism and cultural ties, and perhaps eventually reconciliation and friendship.

It will be a long process. There will be no outburst of brotherly love: there is too much resentment and suspicion on both sides. The walls are not going to come tumbling down overnight, but we can make a start today. For the world order has changed, and so has the shape of the Middle East. Even here, the time has come not least to stop dying and start living.

The starting positions on the Arab side are very difficult for Israelis, even moderate Israelis like me. The starting positions of Mr Shamir's government are very difficult for Arabs, even moderate Arabs. But we should remember that these are starting positions for negotiations, not for a bloody war.

We should not be alarmed at the distance between the present positions of the two sides. In any case, a nation that has defended itself against the whole Arab world single-handed five times and won has no reason to fear the negotiating table. The thing to do at a negotiating table is not to give way to hysterics or sentimentality, but to negotiate patiently, firmly, cunningly on occasion, magnanimously, but above all with breadth of vision. One should be uncompromising about the essentials, but not dig in one's heels over anything we can do without. The most important thing for Israel is to have the wisdom to distinguish between what is vital and what we can give up in exchange for concessions on the Arab side. The meaning of "negotiation", as its Hebrew name makes clear, is give and take.

Of course when it comes to the crunch, we Israelis will give less than the Arabs want from us, and we shall be given less than we dream of. Neither side can realise all its aspirations and desires, but at least parents on both sides will be able to raise their children instead of burying them. That, in case anyone has forgotten, is what these talks are all about.

How should we start? Perhaps with an initial confidence-building exercise. Israel might agree to stop settling the occupied territories for the duration of the negotiations, and the Arabs might agree to end the intifada, to renounce terrorism absolutely, and to lift the boycott on Israel at once. America and Europe might undertake to finance the settlement and absorption of a million Jews in Israel and a million Palestinian refugees outside Israel.

This conference and the subsequent negotiations will drag on, with humdrum bargaining over a strip of land here, a well or two there, inspection arrangements for this and guarantees for that. But even during these boring long hours, when the lawyers are poring over the small print, let us never forget that behind the petty details stands a historic victory for Zionism: at long last our enemies are confronting us not with tanks and missiles but with documents and sub-clauses.

The people who for a hundred years have been demanding that we disappear, go away, die, are now asking for compromises and concessions. By doing so they acknowledge publicly and openly that Israel is an established fact. This recognition is not easy for them, and it does not please them. It is not surprising that some of them are arriving in Madrid today reluctantly, sullenly, shamefacedly.

What about the Israelis? Actually we are entitled to come in smiling. Not ecstatically, but with the justified satisfaction of a people who have achieved within a hundred years more than their forebears dreamt of, with the self-confidence of a people who firmly believed — even in times when it was very hard indeed to believe — that the day would come when the whole world, including our enemies, would accept the reality of Israel.



Amos Oz: hoping for peace after so many years

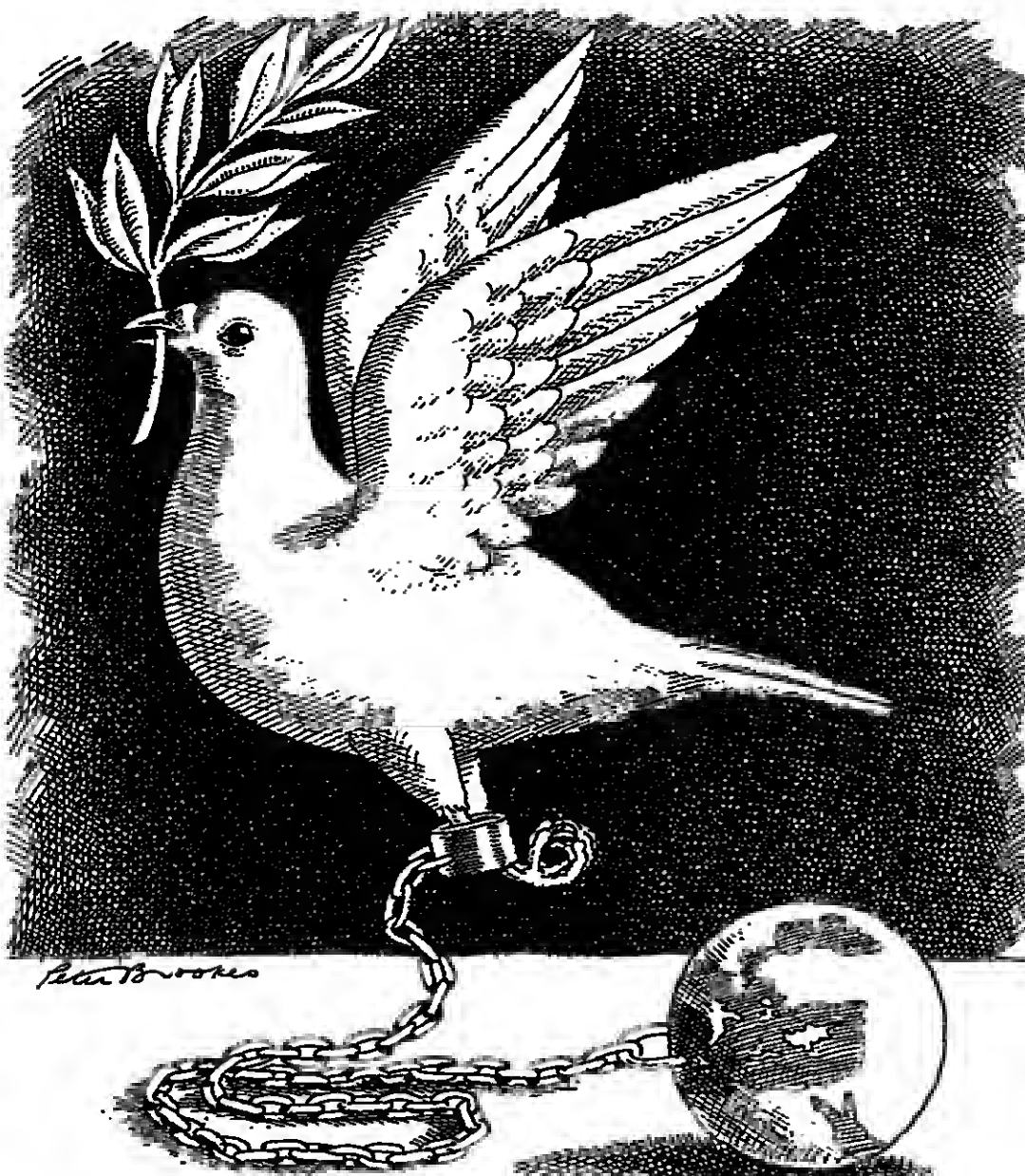
Now that day has come. And from now on, even if there is no honeymoon, there will be a normalisation of the conflict. From this moment on, the question is not, as it was for a hundred years or so, who will disappear and when. The question now is who will get what. Now must begin the complicated effort to settle the dispute over territory, despite the desperate attempts of madmen and fanatics on both sides to change the conflict into a war of religion or an eternal holy struggle.

Today the question of Israel's existence has been struck off the agenda of history, to be replaced by the tricky but resolvable questions of who is to have what, how we are to live side by side, and what this region will be like in the next century.

So the question mark that has been hanging over Israel's existence from its outset has been removed. The Arabs themselves have been compelled to remove it. That is why we are entitled to say today — soberly but without too much gloom — "Praise be to Him who has allowed us to live to see this day."

The author's collection of essays *The Slopes of Lebanon* is published by Vintage at £5.99.

© Amos Oz



A land soaked in blood

Richard Owen traces the conflict back to the Old Testament

There is brutality, passion and thirst for vengeance of the modern Middle East might spring from the pages of the Old Testament. The attack on a West Bank settlers' bus on the eve of the Madrid talks was a crude attempt to upset the peace process just as the participants are inching towards the T-shaped conference table. But the symbolism of the attack reaches deep into the blood-soaked soil of the Holy Land.

Shiloh, where the attack took place, is a re-creation by zealous Jews of the biblical city, which long ago crumbled into the rocky hills of what used to be Palestine. A few miles away from the neat suburban Jewish settlement is Nahal, a teeming Arab city which is the heart of militant Palestinian nationalism, but which the Israelis refer to as biblical Shechem.

Since they have to start somewhere, all peace plans assume Israel's right to security within its 1948-67 borders — "Israel proper". The southern flank of this area is secure. In the north, the argument runs, it should be possible to reach an accommodation with Damascus over the Golan Heights, which Israel took in 1967. For all its militancy, Syria wants to regain lost land, as a matter of Arab pride. Israel wants to ensure that Syria can no longer

shell Jewish settlements below the Heights, as it did before 1967. Similarly, in southern Lebanon, Israel wants to be sure that extremist Palestinians or Muslim fanatics who still oppose the existence of Israel cannot cross the Israeli border to kill Jews.

A case can also be made for a settlement in Gaza, which is of little strategic value to Israel, and is almost impossible to rule. But the West Bank of the Jordan is another matter. To Israeli zealots, the West Bank is Judea and Samaria, part of the biblical heritage of the Jews. The settlements that have sprung up all over the West Bank, and along the 1967 "green line", have a security purpose. Israel, the argument runs, needs a buffer against another Arab assault. But the armed Jewish settlers in Hebron, an hour's drive south of Jerusalem, have no doubt they are also there to re-establish a claim stretching back to the patriarch Abraham.

Forget the modern housing of today's Hebron: what is at stake is the Cave of Machpelah, the great mausoleum which tradition says Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite (Genesis 23, 7). Hebron (el Khalil in Arabic) is holy to Muslims too. The very soil is bound up both with the Bible and with the Koran.

Yitzhak Shamir has a vision of Israel stretching from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. He sees this as an ideal, but many in Likud see it in more practical terms. On the Palestinian side, this vision is matched by the zealots of Hamas, the fundamentalist Muslims who want the same land. Some PLO members too will never rest content with a Palestine that consists only of the West Bank and Gaza, but want the whole of the old Palestine, including Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem.

Control of Jerusalem is so explosive an issue that it is not even on the Madrid agenda. The city is "the eternal Jewish capital", home of King David, site of the Jewish temple destroyed in Roman times; it is also the Muslim "al Quds", the holy place, associated with Muhammad; it is the heartbeat of Christianity.

The anti-riot tear gas that regularly chokes the ancient alleys of the Old City of Jerusalem is the symbol of the clashes such passions engender. But the passions of Jerusalem also run high in the disputed places of the West Bank, where every stone, every well, every olive and fig tree, speaks to the soul of Arab and Jew alike.

Map, page 11

Conor Cruise O'Brien argues that the Palestinians will still be the losers whatever deal is struck in Madrid

The composition of the Madrid conference represents, in appearance at least, a remarkable recovery for the Palestine Liberation Organisation, after the general discredit it earned by supporting Iraq during the Gulf war. The Bush administration clearly still regards the involvement of the PLO as essential to the hopes (whatever exactly these may be) for peace.

Heavy pressure must have been applied behind the scenes to induce Mr Shamir's government to sit down in Madrid with a group of Palestinians who are clearly PLO proxies. Having repeatedly vowed never to talk to the PLO, Mr Shamir will now be talking to the PLO's nominees. It is a distinction without a difference. Israel has clearly given some ground, but it is not anxious to advertise the fact. Mr Shamir's team is composed of his close personal associates. Israel's foreign office is represented by the deputy foreign minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, an extremely able negotiator who served Israel well in a difficult role as permanent representative at the United Nations. He is sufficient of a "hard liner" to have Mr Shamir's confidence, in a way his superior, David Levy, has not.

Overall, the message to the Americans appears to be that Israel has made a big concession by agreeing to meet a group of Palestinians approved by the PLO. A rush of further concessions can hardly be expected. Nor, I think, are they expected.

If Israel has made a concession by agreeing to meet pro-PLO Palestinians, then the PLO and its proxies have made an even bigger concession by accepting the conference invitation. That invitation specifies that the separate negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians will begin with "talks on interim self-government arrangements" for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. With the exception of the single word "interim", that is an Israeli formula and one already rejected by the Palestinians. Their acceptance of an invitation which includes this formula is a measure of how anxious they are to come in from the cold after their damaging Iraqi adventure.

To persuade the government of Israel and the PLO to sit down together, as they will effectively be doing in Madrid, is a significant victory for American diplomacy, and a sign of the American hegemony in the region after Operation Desert Storm. But even hegemony does not confer omnipotence, and nothing less than that could bring agreement between Israelis and Palestinians over the yielding of territory in return for peace.

Optimists cite some signals to the contrary. A recent poll in Israel showed 69 per cent of Israelis favouring "territory for peace". But when Israelis talk of giving up some territory, they mean, perhaps, Gaza. To Palestinians, the formula means, at the very least, the handing back of all the territory acquired in 1967 (including east Jerusalem), and the uprooting of all Jewish settlements

in the occupied territories. No Israeli government could agree to that and survive.

And if, per impossibile, some future Israeli government were to agree to some such thing, it would still not win peace in return. This became apparent last week after some Palestinians accepted the invitations to Madrid. For those who have accepted have received death threats — from the two "rejectionist" fronts which are at odds with the PLO, and from Islamic fundamentalists such as Islamic Holy War, which is now gaining in strength in the territories at the PLO's expense. There were also symptoms of extreme unease inside the PLO. Only last week the combat headquarters in Sidon of Mr Arafat's Fatah organisation was seized, according to news reports, by "about 300 PLO guerrillas" who objected to Mr Arafat's agreement to the Madrid conference. The guerrillas also took over Ain Hilwe, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. The insurrection was led by an officer, Major Munir Makdadi, who is commander of Fatah's own security apparatus in Lebanon, known as Force 17.

These violent reactions have been precipitated by nothing more than the acceptance of an invitation to sit down and talk to Israel. What would Palestinians face who concluded a compromise and peace with Israel?

Many Israelis have long feared that if Israel concludes an agreement conceding territory in return for peace, the very territories conceded will be used as bases for attacks on them. Radical Palestinian responses to the Madrid peace conference tended to confirm those fears.

Agreement between Israelis and Palestinians appears so remote a prospect that one might wonder why the Americans took so much trouble to bring these reluctant interlocutors together. I suspect that, as so often before, the Palestinians are pawns in a game in which they will again be sacrificed. The real American aim, unlike the ostensible one, is an attainable one: peace between Israel and Syria, strengthening and extending Pax Americana in the region. This cannot be achieved unless Mr Shamir is prepared to hand back the Golan Heights to Damascus, which he is extremely reluctant to do. But pressure over "Judea and Samaria", which Mr Shamir cannot concede, may induce him to make the Golan concession which is at least possible, however unpalatable.

There is a precedent: Camp David in 1978. Then Jimmy Carter set the seal on a separate peace between Israel and Egypt. The tacit abandonment of the Palestinians, by both Egypt and America, in concluding that separate peace, was camouflaged at Camp David by the inclusion of a substantively meaningless document on Palestine called "Frame-work for Peace". No doubt a similar fig-leaf can be found for the separate peace between Syria and Egypt, which the American Secretary of State James Baker hopes to conclude before 1996.



...and moreover
ALAN COREN

You would think that after 30 years of doing something, day in, day out, everything that was ever going to surprise you about the doing of it would already have occurred. There would be no more occupational shocks. Fresh would have long ago raised its last goosebump. Alack was somewhere you would never again be taken.

Last Saturday, I received a letter from a reader. I am delighted to report that I get a fair few such, for it is one of the major perks of this lonely trade that soliloquy will often generate colloquy — you sit in your back's hole in the caves, spasmodically tapping your keyboard but never knowing whether anyone is paying any attention, until, from time to time, these sequestered tappings evoke a response: the tappings tap back, much in the manner of the solitarily confined banging Morse telegraphs on the slammer's pipes to cheat their isolation of its prey.

Sometimes they write to concur, sometimes to berate, sometimes to pass on an anecdote or graffiti or handy bousehold hint, sometimes, even, to share a memory of Crickwood, but whatever they offer, they are invariably welcome. All the more so when, like Saturday's, they come from left field: my correspondent wanted me to christen his cat.

I was touched, and, yes, flattered, for the naming of a pet is an intimate business, and it bespoke great trust in whatever

peculiar powers he thought I possessed that this bloke was prepared to invite a complete stranger to saddle his moggy with its life's label. Nor this alone, for in order to give me something to work on, he furnished a number of personal details which under normal circumstances would have got no further than his doctor's walls. He also sent photographs of the new cat, the house it walks about in, and both the family and the dog with which it will henceforth share its life. For he is, patently, as wise as he is meticulous: he knows that a cat's name has to fit more than the cat. It is no good calling a cat Bourne if the dog is called Hollingsworth (unless, of course, your furniture looks as though it belongs to the sort of people who do things like that), nor should it be christened Spot if one of the children has acne.

All this I thus took very seriously: indeed, during that afternoon's England-Scotland match I could think of little else, to the point where I actually missed Rob Andrew's drop-goal by having run upstairs to the attic shelves to try to find out whether old U Tin Bum was still alive, because the kitten was a Burmese, and it had suddenly struck me that the great poet's was as terrific a name as you could shake a joss-stick at, provided it had come back on the market; and by the time I got downstairs again, everybody was swapping shirts.

Nor were my weekend delib-

erations all main text: there was a lot of activity going on in the margins. For example, might naming a cat mean getting lumbered with other godfatherly responsibilities? Would I have to supervise its moral welfare, take it to the Ritz every birthday for a slap-up fish-head tea, slip it a postal-order now and again? More seriously, could this be the start of something big, was there a bob or two to be made out of nomenclature, should I open a place called *Just Names* in some chic Belgravian backwater, to which the well-heeled fraught would flock to get their nomenclastic headaches eased?

It was as I was idly, that night, turning such suppositions over that the aforementioned thing struck me which had never struck before. It began innocently enough with my wondering whether my nice catman might actually have been a bit dotty, for, face it, a million readers cannot be exempt from abnormality. And then it was that the neck-hairs sprang, for it came to me that, statistically, some of you must be very weird indeed. There will be those reading these very lines who have plumed depots of depravity which the imagination cannot even begin to frame. I tap out stuff for ghouls and murderers. I commune with the deranged and the damned. I tell them jokes. We share lives.

It makes you think. Last weekend, the rest of you had an extra hour's kip. All I had was an extra hour's bed.

Popeless case?

THE POPE is upset. While even the EC has a seat at the table in Madrid to debate peace in the Middle East, the Holy See, which has long been pursuing its own peace initiatives in the region, has not been invited.

The omission seems odd. Only last week Pope John-Paul commissioned a "high-ranking prelate" to liaise between Western and Middle Eastern interests, in preparation for the conference. The Vatican declines to name the prelate, but says he is a diplomat who has been serving as a counsellor in a nunciature. The Pope's unofficial foreign minister, the Secretary for Relations with the States, Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, had been privately preparing for Vatican involvement with a visit to the Middle East. Cardinal Etchegaray, the president of the pontifical justice and peace commission, is also known to have been keen to see the Vatican represented at the conference.

The Americans, it is said, were not keen to have the church present, because of the Vatican's less than supportive attitude during the Gulf war. The Russians also felt the Pope did not have a significant role to play in the peace process.

After all the church's efforts in the Middle East, the snub is keenly felt, although the Vatican remains sanguine. Like a party-goer not invited to the season's grandest ball, the director of the Holy See's press office, Dr Navarro-Valls, says the Pope did not want to go anyway. "The Holy See did not ask to participate." It did, however, expect to be asked. Instead, says Navarro-Valls, "the Holy See will express, as it has done up to the present, its concern for the



problem and will make known its expectations through the media and those channels it will consider opportune."

Not all of Europe is yet ready for the free movement of goods across frontiers and borders. The Greek army has just ordered thousands of new tyres for its vehicles. Unfortunately Pirelli, which has the contract, recently closed its factory in Patras, following a labour dispute. The Greek military were not amused when it took delivery of hundreds of tons rubber, all stamped with the words: "Made in Turkey". The entire consignment has been sent back.

Exhibiting tolerance

WHAT are some of Britain's most famous contemporary artists doing on a City street corner with their easels, sketching the Mappin & Webb building? One might think there were more interesting city-scapes, but John Ward, Anthony Eyton and others are painting with a purpose: recording the eight listed buildings which will be demolished as part of Lord Palumbo's Mansion House scheme. The paintings will be exhibited at a show entitled "The Heart of the City" in early December at the Mall Galleries, to raise money for the conservation body SAVE Britain's Heritage, which fought

but failed to stop the development and now faces hefty legal costs.

The artists have spotted all sorts of details on the buildings which they hadn't noticed before," says Marianne Watson-Smyth of SAVE. But the organisation clearly has no hard feelings. Palumbo is top of the invitation list to the opening.

Life in the fast lane

UNLIKELY as it may sound, the M25 has a fan club which expects to recruit thousands of new members as a result of the opening today of the new bridge at Dartford. A group of businessmen and hoteliers is hard at work trying to convince us that the M25 presents exciting business opportunities. Peter Rand of the M25 Meetings Group has already taken clients to view the bridge. "We took 100 clients from major companies onto



the bridge last week. We took a coach to the middle of the bridge, generally nosed around and enjoyed the spectacular views." Other schemes to promote the motorway include the M25 Business Inspiration Awards, for the best business ideas dreamt up

As others see us

IMAGE-MAKERS are concerned about their own image. Selling sand to the Sahara or beachwear at the north pole — nothing is beyond the wit of the public relations industry. Yet the PR men feel they have done less than a good job in selling themselves. PR, they fear, has become almost a derogatory term, synonymous with manipulation and even deceit.

So the search is on for a new, more marketable name to market the marketing men. The trade press has recently been full of suggestions. One receiving considerable support is "prop", short for "PR operative", but also cleverly implying the supposedly vital supporting role. Another suggestion, from Chris Twigger of Shaw & Underwood, is an acronym of "Person Responsible for Issuing Communications".

Is Gerald Rotner about to set a legal precedent by suing over the use of his own words? According to a memo from the BBC legal department, the purveyor of "trinkets to the masses" now has a firm of city lawyers acting for him, complaining about continuing references to his goods. "as crap." Several newspapers have already been caught out. But wasn't it Rotner himself who came up with the description? Indeed, but he did not mean that everything he sold was "total crap" — only a sherry decanter set with six glasses on a silver-plated silver tray.



NO FUDGE ON EMU

A British signature on the EC treaty on economic and monetary union this December is no foregone conclusion. To be sure, the text of the Dutch presidency's latest draft, with its multi-speed approach to Emu, is a tribute to John Major's tactical flexibility and strategic steadiness over the past year. But the announcement from No 10 yesterday that Britain will not sign an accompanying, non-binding, declaration of support for Emu is merely a sideshow. The treaty is what matters.

A year ago Britain was told that if it did not sign this treaty, the other 11 would go ahead and leave it isolated. Since then Mr Major has resisted offers to leave Britain free to decide when it would sign up for monetary union, provided it agreed that a single currency and a European Central Bank was its ultimate goal. By holding out, Mr Major has achieved his two main objectives. He has prevented Britain from being frozen out of the arguments during the "transitional" phase of preparation for Emu, while at the same time keeping Britain's options genuinely open.

The case for remaining part of the increasingly tense discussion on Emu is that Britain will be affected by Emu even if it remains outside. Britain therefore has an unquestionable interest in seeing that Emu takes place on the basis of low inflation and sound public finance. Britain has an equally keen interest in containing the demands of the weaker EC economies for large financial transfers to enable them to meet the rules governing membership. The draft treaty lays down strict criteria on inflation, interest and exchange rates, budgetary deficits and the level of public debt. Spain is already demanding that the "right" to aid to meet these requirements be built into the treaty. Hence German doubts about Emu, and hence the need to ensure that Britain is not billed for helping other countries to achieve an objective it does not share. This is Britain's continuing interest in the debate.

Under the current draft, Britain would sign up to Stage 2 of Emu, the period beginning in 1994 during which EC governments prepare for Emu, but be free not to go forward to Stage 3, full monetary union with a single currency and central bank. The advance achieved by Britain has been to cut

out complicated transitional obligations under Stage 2 which would have left the government in control of little more than fiscal policy and public spending.

Article 109G of the new draft removes most of these problems. It states that no government can be compelled by the Council of Ministers to proceed to Stage 3 of Emu. Any country whose parliament "does not feel able to approve of the irrevocable fixing of its currency" would be granted exemption from full Emu. Exemption would even free Britain from a series of obligations during Stage 2. There will still be moral suasion to meet Emu targets in monetary and fiscal policies during this "transitional" phase, but sanctions against non-compliers begin only in Stage 3 and apply only to Emu countries. Britain could remain outside all this.

Having won so much, the Dutch presidency argues, Britain should surely not be so scrupulous as to refuse to put its signature to a harmless (because non-binding) 11-line declaration to be appended to the treaty. Yet what is the point of this declaration? It negates all the above and calls for a "swift transition" to Emu by "all member states", and expresses "their strongest intention" to participate in Stage 3 "without exemption".

Britain's co-operation has been sought by the Dutch and others on the ground that Germany, not Britain, is the declaration's target. A statement of good will signed by all would be some insurance against backsliding by Helmut Kohl, for whom (and for whose countrymen) Emu is increasingly seen as a price Germany would reluctantly pay for a genuine United States of Europe. The greater the likelihood of a treaty on political union falling well short of German ambitions, the more valuable this declaration on economic union is to the Dutch presidency, and to the French.

As the Maastricht deadline nears, the whole European union process is naturally becoming ever more complicated. Mr Major is right to refuse this latest diplomatic fudge. To sign the declaration would not only be cynical, since he has consistently rejected a single currency and central bank. It would crack the Tory party wide open. Mr Major has balanced the odds nicely in the Emu negotiations so far. He must stick to his last.

CREATIVE CONFIDENCE

Swallows enough have been spotted amid the economic indicators since mid-summer, but until now the blue skies of recovery have stubbornly failed to follow. Does yesterday's survey from the CBI finally herald the sunshine? Its professed rise in business optimism is the most positive for 17 years. In July pessimists outnumbered optimists by 26 percentage points. Now the optimists have it, by a majority of 2 percentage points. The relief within the Treasury is palpable.

The government's public response was carefully modulated. Norman Lamont said that the economy was coming out of recession. He has yet to respond to the urgings of his neighbour in Downing Street to proclaim recovery under way. There he is certainly right. Of the firms responding to the CBI, 69 per cent report that they are operating below capacity and 89 per cent that orders, not shortages of people or machines, are holding back output.

Sceptics might go further and question the validity of the plethora of confidence surveys on which ministers are now placing so much reliance. No credence would be given to a weather forecaster who based his predictions on a survey of what people thought the weather would be like. Similarly, it is argued, no confidence should be placed in confidence indicators. What industry thinks will happen to the economy has little to do with what will happen to the economy.

That said, the CBI survey has a record of success in predicting turning points in the economic cycle. It predicted the sharp recovery of 1975. It pointed strongly to a turn for the better in 1981 at a time when 365 economists had just given their now infamous warning of endless gloom in prospect. The CBI was proved right and the

massed ranks of Keynesian conventional wisdom wrong. As a result of that experience, confidence indicators have proliferated. The findings of all established surveys are now consistent with the CBI's.

The analogy with weather forecasting does not hold up. Industrialists are not passive victims of economic circumstances, in the way that people are victims of bad weather. They help to create them. Recovery depends on the animal spirits of entrepreneurs, which inform their decisions on output, investment, employment and so on. Once they start to lift, the economy will lift with them. Moreover, the recovery of confidence this time is not mere whim. It is underpinned by developments in the real economy. Interest rates are 4 per cent lower than a year ago. Consumer confidence is rising slowly. Pay is rising faster than prices, gradually adding to purchasing power. The financial position of the company sector is improving.

The signs do not yet suggest a boom in prospect. Growth next year will at best recoup this year's negative growth. It remains true that the government kept interest rates too high for too long and unnecessarily delayed recovery. But taken with the confidence indicators, these current indicators make it unlikely that the recession will continue.

Chancellors used to moan that they were in the position of a driver forced to steer by what he saw in the mirror. Only statistics of what had happened were available, and they frequently misled. Thanks to confidence indicators, that is no longer true. When Mr Lamont delivers his Mansion House speech tomorrow, he will have something better than a long-term weather forecast to go on.

MUSIC OF THE MOTORWAY

Trans-European highways were conceived by the Romans, who built and maintained some 50,000 miles of road for several centuries. Soviet domination of Eastern Europe bequeathed a legacy of potholes. Commerce not warfare is now the driving force behind continental road-building. Two trans-European motorways are planned, east-west and north-south, linking the former communist states and the heartlands of capitalism. What will be their impact on the lives of ordinary Europeans?

The north-south corridor, first mooted 20 years ago, will stretch from the Baltic coast of Poland through Prague, Vienna and Budapest, with branches to Italy and the Balkans, ending in Turkey. Of the eventual 10,000km some 2,000km have been built since 1977; another 4,000km are in progress. Its future depends on the hexagonal group, the "antechamber" of the European Community" set up by Italy to give Eastern Europe another focus besides Germany. Since it was launched last year one member of the hexagon, Yugoslavia, has fallen apart. Lack of funds hinders progress everywhere. Hungary is paying for its motorways with tolls; others may follow.

The east-west motorway will connect Berlin with Moscow, new Germany and new Russia, taking in Poland and the republic of Belorussia en route. This highway is intended to grease the German-Russian economic axis, already overloading the decrepit road from Warsaw to Poznan.

These vast routes will alter not only the economies but also the cultures of the countries through which they pass. They would be a powerful force for standardisation. A standard currency, probably the Deutschmark, might be needed to pay for tolls and petrol. Restaurants and hotels along the route would conform to common expectations, with a few big firms controlling most franchises. Driving rules would have to be agreed. Only etiquette, a far more constant expression of nationhood than food or clothes, would resist standardisation.

Those who have not driven in Eastern Europe cannot imagine what these new highways will mean to the lorry-driver, the business traveller and the tourist. To be able to drive at more than an average of 30mph would be a second liberation.

But for how long? Along with the trans-European highway will sooner or later come the trans-European traffic jam. A taste of this may persuade a few thoughtful people to eschew Tarmac and return to Europe's natural highways, more ancient even than those of the Romans. The Danube and its tributaries link the capitals of central Europe better than any motorway. No motorway has yet inspired music, as the Rhine and the Vitava did Schumann and Smetana. As the trans-European in transit pauses for refreshment at a Little Chef somewhere on the Moscow road, what will be the theme of the piped music he hears as he eats his caviar-burger? The Volga boatman's song?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Decision on individual's 'right to die'

From the Chairman of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society
Sir, There is simply no evidence to support the statement by Dame Cicely Saunders (letter, October 19) that "a 'legalised right to die'... can lead to a presumed duty to die". Nor is there evidence for the difficulty which Dame Cicely sees in granting that right without undermining the claims to care of the many.

Acknowledging the wish of people to control their lives does not make us less considerate of the needs of others. Dame Cicely would not care less for her patients if the law were changed. In any event the bill which this society has prepared has provisions to introduce safeguards, as far as it is practicable to do so, against improper pressure being applied.

Similarly, Mr Colin Harte produces a fine non-sequitur (letter, October 19) by saying that "The proposed legislation, far from acknowledging a right to die... reveals a prejudice that vulnerable people... do not deserve the same respect, dignity and proper medical care as other people".

It is extraordinarily difficult for opponents of voluntary euthanasia to see that its proponents do not wish to take anything from anyone, either openly or covertly, certainly not the skilled and loving care which the sick receive in hospices and elsewhere. We wish only to have the right to decide that we do not choose to avail ourselves of it if we believe that the short extra time that would be gained does not justify the indignity (not merely the pain) of incurable illness.

This society would strongly support the proposal in your leading article today for a commission of enquiry into euthanasia: thorough and open discussion of the issue is long overdue. Headed by someone of appropriate stature, such a commission could take the debate onto a plane where the intricate questions inherent in the subject are sufficiently clarified for the making of informed decisions.

Yours faithfully,
MALCOLM HURWITT, Chairman,
The Voluntary Euthanasia Society - Exit,
13 Prince of Wales Terrace, W8,
October 28.

From Mr Luke Gormally
Sir, Your second leader today confuses what is at issue in the debate over legalising voluntary euthanasia by speaking of a "decision to die" and a "right to live or die". What is at issue is legalisation of decisions by patients to have doctors kill them, and legalisation, therefore, of the "justification" doctors will have for killing patients.

What is the relevant justification for killing that we are invited to accept? It cannot be simply that the patient has asked to be killed, nor that the patient takes a dim view of his or her existence. Doctors of all persuasions would set aside such requests if they believed the patient had continuing prospects of a worthwhile life. It is only if the doctor judges that the patient no longer has a worthwhile life that he

will think himself justified in killing the patient.

So the main burden of justifying euthanasia killing has to be borne not so much by the fact of a patient's request, but by the responsible doctor's judgment that the patient's life is no longer worthwhile. The logic of such a position is that where choice cannot be exercised there can be no objection in principle to killing incompetent patients whose lives are judged "worthless" or "pointless".

It is a fundamental assumption of our system of criminal justice that every human being possesses worth and basic rights simply in virtue of being human. No human being is to be killed intentionally on the ground that he or she lacks a worthwhile life.

To discriminate between human beings in terms of "quality of life" is to abandon a coherent conception of justice. All this ought to be recognisable by anyone with an understanding of the foundations of justice in our society, whether or not they think those foundations have a warrant in religious belief.

In any case, it is unworthy of you to seek to portray absolutist opposition to euthanasia as a peculiarity of Catholics. That is a propagandist device. Opposition to voluntary euthanasia is a tenet common to Orthodox Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The logic of accommodating "voluntary euthanasia" is now clear from the data provided by the government committee of enquiry (the Remmelink report) in The Netherlands. Of 49,000 deaths directly influenced by clinical management in 1990, 19,675 (40 per cent) were euthanasia deaths; of these, 13,816 were cases of non-voluntary and involuntary euthanasia. We have no need of a government committee of enquiry of our own.

Yours sincerely,
LUKE GORMALLY (Director),
The Linacre Centre,
60 Grove End Road, NW8,
October 28.

From Mr Rupert Ridge
Sir, Dr Stephen Henderson Smith's letter (October 21) is chilling, not so much because of the conclusion he reaches about learning to die "at the right time" but because of the thinking behind it that he expresses.

If we have "absorbed... abortion" and need to move on in the field of timely death might the time arise also to "absorb", for example, the killing of babies after birth if we then found some reason? Would it be a welcome sign that "attitudes to life have changed radically" if we recognised that other, older, people may not be qualified to decide "the right time" for themselves and that others may be better qualified to decide for them?

The chipping away at the sanctity of life is frightening, immoral and dangerous. "Attitudes to life" have not improved if Dr Smith's letter remains unchallenged.

Yours faithfully,
RUPERT RIDGE,
Brookley Elm House, Brockley,
Blackwell, Bristol, Avon,
October 21.

and airlines alike, and its place as the world's pre-eminent international air gateway, did not come about by accident. London has won its position at the top of world air transport through initiative and investment over many years. The benefits to the UK's international trade and the domestic economy are self-evident.

To throw this situation away by privatisation over urgently-needed development and expansion would be a matter of the utmost regret to us; but an occasion for rejoicing among those continental European cities who are actively planning to usurp our position.

Our philosophy is based on the tried and trusted principle of building on existing strengths as the only logical way forward.

Your report seems to follow the hypothesis that should developments such as Terminal 5 and the rail-air link be further delayed or dismissed, British Airways would move elsewhere. We do not contemplate such a course of action.
Yours faithfully,
DAVID BURNSIDE,
Director of Public Affairs,
British Airways,
Heathrow Airport (London),
Hounslow, Middlesex,
October 29.

Army releases

From Professor Alan Thompson
Sir, The issue of civilian employment for ex-service personnel raised by Mr Andrew Freemantle (letter, October 25) deserves more attention by management in industry, commerce and the public services.

There is little doubt that prejudice against ex-service applicants for jobs exists in all these sectors (although there are honourable exceptions). The stereotypes of Colonel Blimp or the wooden-headed sergeant-major (who no doubt once existed but can rarely be found today) still persist in the minds of some employers.

As an economist who has maintained close links over several decades with both the private and public sectors, I have come across these attitudes so frequently that, in references I write for ex-students who have served for a spell in the armed services, I have to stress the achievements and advantages of modern service life and try to dispel the false conceptions and prejudices. Modern service personnel receive training in management skills and,

no less important, in efficiency and loyalty in their appointed tasks. My impression is that management training is provided not only for officers but down to much lower ranks here than in many other countries. This was demonstrated in the Gulf war, where one was struck by the calm, assured, and impressive manner in which young people of all ranks expressed themselves in television coverage.

Before the Gulf war fades from our memories we should remind ourselves of these facts, and bear in mind the aptitudes and energies that ex-service applicants can bring to civilian employment.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN THOMPSON,
11 Upper Gray Street, Edinburgh 9.

From the Adjutant General
Sir, Andrew Freemantle implies that our policy on releasing officers and soldiers from the army is designed solely to the advantage of the army and at the expense of the individual seeking re-employment. He should rest assured that, as the army goes through the present difficult process

Finding the right voice for London

From Mr Christopher Frazer
Sir, I fear that Mr Green's suggestion (letter, October 25) of a London MPs' grand committee will simply not work: many disparate, point-scoring voices are hardly the ideal recipe for strategic vision and executive implementation. All sides in this debate accept that the concept of individual London boroughs will remain, whatever boundary changes and amalgamations (like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's idea of a central London super-borough, which you report today) may occur. So genuinely London-wide problems require a coordinating exhortatory figure with sufficient authority to be able to coax or cajole the boroughs to work together to produce London-wide solutions.

Mr Green's requested "authentic voice which will be heard with respect in Whitehall" must be heard and heeded by the town halls too. Only a directly-elected London-wide voice fits the bill. And the people's voice would be all the more authoritative if supported by an advisory council (senate) of men and women distinguished in those areas which concern every Londoner: most pressing are transport, blight, and London's position as a leading world financial centre.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER FRAZER,
2 Harcourt Buildings, Temple, EC4,
October 25.

From Mr Peter Bottomley, MP for Eatham (Conservative)

Sir, Damian Green echoes my belief that the need is for an authoritative forum for London, not an authority or extra administration.

Members of Parliament do have links with every part of London, with each issue and with the problems and opportunities for the capital. The gains will come where there is agreement across parties and across borough boundaries.

The first step should be the re-unification of the boroughs in one association. Labour can help by scrapping the ALA (Association of London Authorities).

Intelligence museum

From Mr John Moe
Sir, Mr Nigel West, who suggests the establishment of a museum dealing with intelligence and special operations during the second world war ("Britain's secret history", October 12), may like to know that in August 1970 our present king, then Crown Prince Harald, opened Norway's Resistance Museum, housed in Akershus Castle, Oslo.

In its archives this museum has copies of about half the 10,000 or so messages radiocoded by Norwegian resistance operators from Norwegian soil. Among them is the one received and deciphered in the UK, reporting the sinking of the Tirpitz,

before the attacking aircraft and brave crew had returned to their base.

These messages are available here in English translation and may well be of interest to the proposed new museum in the UK.

My interest is inspired by my own engagement as double agent Mutt of the Mutt and Jeff team that operated from London and Aberdeen between 1941 and 1944, feeding the German Abwehr with deception messages regarding Allied troop movements.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MOE,
Mikkels Reys vei 65,
N 0688 Oslo, Norway,
October 24.

From Mr Peter Jackson
Sir, The decision by the Police Dependents' Trust to refuse money from Libya (report, October 19) is no doubt well meant, but mistaken. Of course, no amount of money can compensate for the death of WPC Yvonne Fletcher or the harm caused by support of the IRA, but it should nevertheless be accepted as a gesture and a first step towards acknowledgement that Libya's actions were wrong.

One of the most difficult things for anyone to say is "sorry", particularly when entrenched stands have been taken over time. Which is why so often we, and even more so other cultures where customs and practice differ, resort to codes when talking that embarrassing first step towards admission of guilt.

Emotional talk of "blood money" is unhelpful. There is no evidence that Colonel Gaddafi has demanded or expects anything in return: the money should be accepted for what it clearly is, a first step towards a dialogue which may be more fruitful not only for UK-Libyan relations but also with regard to the world need for a settlement of Middle East conflicts.

It was right for Britain to take a moral stand over, for example, the Falklands or Kuwait; but positive, forward-looking use of diplomacy might have avoided both.

There is a time for taking moral stances and a time for statesmanship and building bridges. I hope the Police Dependents' Trust will think again and the government take a lead by responding in a mature manner to Libyan overtures.

Yours faithfully,
PETER JACKSON,
24a Western Avenue,
Branksome Park, Poole, Dorset.

Waiting for a heart

From Dr Margaret Y. A. Oliver
Sir, Years ago my son John, aged 25, died in a road accident in Cambridge and was taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital. We were not asked to donate organs and did not think of it until next day, when we were told it was too late. Now I still deeply regret this waste of his fine, healthy body.

He carried a donor card. Perhaps, if these were displayed in cars beside the licence disc, Mrs Tansey's grandson (letter, October 24) might live.

Yours truly,
MARGARET Y. A. OLIVER,
East Morningside House,
Edinburgh 8.

Family reunion

From Mrs Florence Somerville
Sir, I was intrigued to see that you used as an illustration to "No treasures in an empty box" (October 19) a long-forgotten photograph of myself, family and friends gathered round the television in 1954. We were watching one of the first party political broadcasts on our newly-acquired set.

You may be interested to know that the schoolboy on the right of the picture is my son, now director of the Reuter Foundation.

Yours sincerely,
F. SOMERVILLE,
15 Dryden Road,
Bush Hill Park,
Enfield, Middlesex.

Cheque from Libya

From Mr Peter Jackson
Sir, The decision by the Police Dependents' Trust to refuse money from Libya (report, October 19) is no doubt well meant, but mistaken. Of course, no amount of money can compensate for the death of WPC Yvonne Fletcher or the harm caused by support of the IRA, but it should nevertheless be accepted as a gesture and a first step towards acknowledgement that Libya's actions were wrong.

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Yours faithfully,
PETER JACKSON,
24a Western Avenue,
Branksome Park, Poole, Dorset.

Mythmatched

From Mr Fritz Spiegel
Sir, I once found *A Leap Over the Wall*, in which Monica Baldwin recounted her escape from an enclosed order of nuns, on a bookshelf labelled "Athletics". That was almost as good, I think, as the library index reference I heard of where Chiang Kai-shek was tracked down under "ISSIMO, General, Chiang Kai-shek".

Yours faithfully,
FRITZ SPIEGEL,
4 Windermere Terrace,
Liverpool 8, Merseyside,
October 29.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number - (071 782 5046).

NEW RELEASES

BOYZ IN THE HOOD (15): Black urban drama from hot-shot director John Singleton, played with realism, but somewhat stilted. With Laurence Fishburne, Ice Cube, Cuba Gooding Jr. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

DEAD AGAIN (15): An L.A. interior murder from the Forties returns to haunt Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson. Nonstop, over-the-top suspense thriller. Branagh directs. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

DOCTEUR PETIT (12): French social realist (Michel Seneor) chillingly accurate record of Nazi-occupied Paris. Stylishly in German Expressionist style, director, Christian de Chalonge. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

FLUTING (12): Steps to maturity at age 16. A beautiful young woman in 1935. Delightful sequel to *The Young Man* from director John Dugan. With Noah Taylor, Thandie Newton. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

HOMECOMING (15): David Mamet's study of a Jewish cop in New York's snaky pit. Started as a comedy, but a vivid picture of urban hell. Starring Joe Mantegna. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

MORTAL THOUGHTS (15): Brutal husband gets his throat slashed, wife and best friend have blood on their hands, and the police on their tail. Stylish, brooding drama, with David Harewood, Glenn Headly, Bruce Willis. Director, Alan Rudolph. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

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CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol ♀) on release across the country.

ZESTFUL TREATMENT (15): Mario Varguey's multi-layered novel. Director, Jon Amiel. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

CITY SLICKERS (15): Over-stretched sentimental comedy with Billy Crystal and churning mid-life crisis during a cattle truck. Starring Daniel Stern, Bruno Kirby, Helen Slater. Director, Ron Underwood. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

THE COMMITMENTS (15): Hard-boiled Dublin youngsters from a soul band. Frail, funny, and beautifully played by a largely amateur cast. Director, Alan Parker. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

DEKALOG PARTS 5 AND 6 (15): A devastating analysis of a series of murders. A masterpiece of the Polish New Wave. Director, Krzysztof Kieslowski. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

DOC HOLLYWOOD (12): L.A. sound doctor (Michael J. Fox) becomes involved in the sticks. Silly comedy whose charm quickly fades. Director, David Zucker. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

EDWARD II (15): Rivaling version of Marlowe's play by Derek Jarman. Words and images leap out at the audience. Starring Ian McKellen and John Gielgud. (Cannes: Haywardfest 1991 1627) Pathé Home (071-570 0200) Screen on the Green (071-520 0200) Whittaker (071-732 3332)

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Collapsing under pressure

THEATRE
It's Ralph
Comedy

THE characters in Hugh Whitmore's previous stage plays, from the poet Stevie Smith to the Soviet spies in *Pack of Lies*, from the scientist Alan Turing to Bernard Shaw in *The Best of Friends*, have all had one thing in common: they actually existed. That may have suggested some lack of imagination on his part, but it helped to give his work discipline, shape and coherence. Here, for the first time, he lets his fancy roam and range, often to entertaining effect. Yet there is an inadvertent aptness in the evening's most spectacular event, the collapse of much of Carl Tom's country-cottage set. Whitmore's dramatic structure, too, is pretty rickety.

The cottage is, as it happens, symbolic in a more intentional way. It is an expensive but unsound blend of 17th-century timber and modern chic and, as such, rather like its owner. He is the deeply inauthentic Andrew Gale, television celebrity, adulterer and hilarious grouch. His public image is underlain by a presumably honest but brutal, brutally honest, 'poofas', Italians and other intimates, as he does in private. The impression, left by Timothy West, who plays him with bunched shoulders and bunched jaws, is of a huge, peeling sea-turtle, peering out of his shell for prey.

Never mind that the author persistently invites our laughter for a blimpishness he simultaneously condemns. West's comic energy is enough to justify such hypocrisies. But then Whitmore introduces his second main character, Jack Shepherd's

Ralph, a chum from the 1950s that the great man has all but forgotten. The function of this intruder is to remind Andrew of Aldermaston marches, late-night conversations about international brotherhood in Soho jazz clubs, and other times when "there was a kind of purity" in the country. The television star is, it seems, not just a witty cat. He is yet another illustration of that contemporary cliché, sold-out idealism.

Still, this produces some amusing encounters, with West's Andrew deciding that Shepherd's Ralph must be a blackmailer, and eyeing him the way, baleful way a battle-scarred reptile might watch some prey, spruce mongoose. The trouble is that Whitmore seems uncertain what else and what more to do with his characters. Some mildly erotic exchanges between Ralph and Andrew's wife are not especially plausible, though the latter's weary frustration is nicely conveyed by Connie Booth. And Andrew's last-act conversion to a kind of distraught honesty is even more awkwardly engineered.

Suddenly the cynical fibber, who has argued that "lies and delusions make life tolerable", starts unbending himself. There is, he growls, a "dichotomy, gulf, ravine between the honesty I want to create and the feelings I have deep down". He even wants, Ralph, who has somewhat improbably been hired to mend the rotting roof, to help fix his psyche, too. But it is hard to believe him, or to accept Whitmore's play and Clifford Williams's production for what they are: oodles earnestly trying to become, a dramatic debate about the elusiveness of truth. *It's Ralph*, like Andrew's cottage, cannot finally bear the strain.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Timothy West as Ralph: a sea-turtle, peering out of his shell for prey

THEATRE
When It's Over
Finborough, Earls Court

A PREVIOUS play by Geraldine Sherman, co-author with Eduardo Machado of this present play, showed how Eva and Kurt behaved when their daughter was growing up as a London schoolgirl in the Fifties. Pretty badly, all things considered: angered by her estrangement from her, jealous of her fondness for a sympathetic teacher (Jill Bennett in her last stage role). Perhaps it is because the author felt all things had not been considered that she has taken the story back to wartime, to show why Kurt abandoned Eva and what

persuaded Eva to consign her day-old daughter to a Jewish orphanage, seldom managing to visit her. Kurt (Vincenzo Nicolai) makes a poor showing: a complacent, ex-Viennese street trader, offering flashy smiles and fake silk ties to anything in a skirt. Eva (Esther Freud), a refugee from Berlin, appeals more calculatedly to audience sympathy by some how managing to be victimised by everyone she meets. A chilling Kensington lady dismisses her for singing Schubert lullabies to the children; ARP wardens chivy her, a lascivious schoolboy tries to rape her — and he with a father in the war cabinet. A cold-hearted IRA girl (Anna Niland) attempts to abort Eva's child — a squamous patron may wish to study other parts of Andrew Hunt's set during this scene — and an equally

sexually inhibited guard — it adds up to nothing in particular. The play consists of little more than a sequence of brief episodes, as if Sherman wished to stage fragments of a family history but shrank from dramatising them.

Fleeting moments to Annie Tyson's ingenious production make their mark: Freud's tip of the head is *echt Deutsch*, and Hunt cleverly packs into the small stage a bedroom, pub, playground, shelter, street and church against a City skyline complete with searchlight beam. Logically, further prequel to this prequel could be set in Nazi Berlin, Franz Josef's Vienna, Bismarck's Prussia and so on. But, with a few more dramatic purpose introduced.

JEREMY KINGSTON

ROCK
Seal
Hammersmith Odeon

SINCE he came to prominence as the singer and co-writer of Adamski's No 1 hit "Killer" in the spring of 1990, Seal has become the first bona fide rock star of the house generation. His self-titled debut album, produced with all the state-of-the-art trimmings by Trevor Horn, topped the chart last June and an impressive half-million copies have been sold in Britain alone. Apart from the undoubted merit of his songs, Seal owes his success so far to the striking effect of his appearances on television, video, radio, in the press and on vast billboards. Yet the alchemy of a live show can still reveal more about a performer than all the other media exposures put together, too often exposing musical weaknesses and testing a charisma which may have been artificially pumped up by hidden persuaders.

For Seal, the effect was quite the reverse, and his (official) London debut put real flesh on the bones of his stage-manicured, wide-eyed, under-the-moon, a well-paced and imaginatively-lit show that was a model of invention and concision, he produced a thrilling array of musical shades.

At 28, the London-bred singer of Brazilian-Nigerian parentage is young enough to have absorbed the rave culture of acid house but old enough to be aware of the rock and soul traditions that preceded it. He has simply helped himself to the best of all available worlds, a fact reflected by the powerful yet flexible make-up of his group: a guitarist from the Prince school of *house couture*, a keyboard boffin, a bass player in skate-boarder-from-hell chic and a drummer who sounded alternately like a drum machine and a powerhouse rocker. Seal, in his black leather trousers, billowing white shirt and stylishly arranged dreadlocks, exuded quiet confidence and a sex appeal delicately balanced between the macho and the vulnerable. So too was his singing: soulful with a gruff edge. He put across these facets of his singing personality on a tremendous version of Jimi Hendrix's "Hey Joe" where he used his two distinct voices as either side of the cooverture which takes place within the song, a trick which not even Hendrix attempted.

DAVID SINCLAIR

DANCE
Mysteries
Bloomsbury

ANY composer who takes on the Bluebeard story after Bartók is doing himself no favours. Luckily for Ian Dearden, all that was required of him in *Mysteries* was to provide a lively rhythmic accompaniment for Kim Brandstrup's latest ballet. Judging by Brandstrup's Arc Dance Company's performance in its London premiere last week, Dearden has fulfilled his part ably if unmemorably.

Bluebeard in this version is a tall morose gentleman (Michael Falwell) who sits in a gloomy room playing with his sword and letting the servants get out of hand. He shows so little enthusiasm for his wives that you might wonder why he bothers to marry at least three of them. Luckily the first two quickly collapse after looking inside the large door that dominates the scene, and the bullying servants carry them off. We then discover that the woman in a green suit who has already appeared twice in front of the door is the wife No 3 (Cheryl Budge). She carries a violin and pretends to play it, as she possibly be Old Nick in disguise? Now it is Bluebeard who is tempted to visit the secrets behind the door, and the

wife who stops him. They duel, she using her violin bow instead of a sword. The poor man stands no chance and ends the ballet on the floor, deprived (with obvious symbolism) of his weapon.

Brandstrup's choreographic method is to take little passages of movement which have a dramatic purpose, and repeat them over and over to make formal patterns. It provides a fairly baroque effect. His limitation, like that of too many choreographers today, is a highly limited vocabulary of movement. A few favoured steps keep recurring in different contexts, for instance a distinctively odd jump for Bluebeard's retainers which we have already seen earlier in this double bill serving for a Jewish wedding in *The Dybbuk*. It makes for a rather superficial result, all decoration and no heart.

As always, Brandstrup's presentation is very smooth. It is put over with a deft assurance which, combined with the bustling insistence of the choreography and moments of brooding portentousness, make the work appear purposeful. The costumes by Fatini Dimou are handsome, but Tina MacHugh's lighting for this and *The Dybbuk* did draw attention to a general air of gloom over the evening as a whole.

JOHN PERCIVAL

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 22

YARPHA
(b) A pest-bog, pest combined with clay or sand, the sort of hole you should avoid in the darkest Highlands, from the Old Norse *yarfi* gravel, *Sir* Walter Scott: "The poor yarpha, as the benighted creatures here call their pest-bog."

CRUBEEN
(a) A (cooked) pig's trotter, or the foot of any animal whether cooked or raw, from the Irish *crubán*, diminutive of *crab*; James Joyce, *Ulysses*: "Dublin MacCabe takes a crubeen and a bottle of Florence X for supper every Saturday."

PHELLEM
(c) Cork, the cork tree or its spongy wood, in botanical usage, comes from the Greek *phellon* cork. The type of phellon used for bottle corks consists of thin-walled, air-filled cells.

SERPIGO
(a) A general term for creeping or spreading skin diseases, poxes, itches, and all such scratchy nuisances, from the Latin *serpere* to creep: "Serpigo is a sharpness of a man's skin, and it is cleyd serpigo if it passes from place to place."

ENTERTAINMENTS

By Raymond Keene, Chief Correspondent

Today's position is in the game *Estimote*, a Bosnian, Yugoslav 1948. Back to play and win.

THEATRE
ROYAL THEATRE 071 434 5091 cc 071 434 5092
ROMEO & JULIET
DANCE 071 434 5091 cc 071 434 5092
THEATRE 071 434 5091 cc 071 434 5092

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THEATRE
ROYAL THEATRE 071 434 5091 cc 071 434 5092
ROMEO &



6.00 Ceefax 5.30 BBC Breakfast News
9.05 Killy, Robert Kilroy-Silk chairs a topical discussion
9.50 Hot Chefs. Paul Gayer prepares noisles and sprouts gnochie
10.00 News, regional news and weather 10.05 Playdays (r) 10.25 The Family News. Cartoon adventures (r)
10.30 Happy Menagerie. Nostalgia show in which Cliff Michelson and Wendy Gibson are able to relive their memories with music and archive film
11.00 News, regional news and weather 11.05 No Kidding. Mike Smith and Katie Copstick host another round of the family quiz game (s)
11.30 News, regional news and weather 11.35 Pebble MIM. The winners of the Radio Times Comedy Awards are announced 12.55 Regional News and weather
1.00 One O'Clock News and weather
1.30 Neighbours. (Ceefax) (s) 1.50 Four Squares. Knock-out quiz (s)
2.15 Hawaii Five-O. Full feature film. The long-running American police series. McGarrett (Jack Lord) battles a cruise ship murderer (r)
3.05 PrimeTime. David Jacobs and Sheila McClellan return for a new series aimed at the mature viewer, and introduce a new feature, *Easy at Sixty*
3.50 Dooley's Duck Truck. Cartoon series (r) 3.55 Orville and Cuddles. Cartoon 4.00 F.L.L.S. Comedy series starring Trevor Laird 4.20 The Chipmunks. Cartoon 4.35 Harbort. Tony Hart and Gabriella Bradshaw with innovative ideas on art
5.00 Newsround 5.10 Byker Grove. Third episode of the 10-part children's drama set in a Newcastle youth club. (Ceefax)
5.35 Neighbours. (r) (Ceefax) (s) 5.55 The Island. Inside the 6.00 Six O'Clock News with Anna Ford and Andrew Harvey. Weather
6.30 Regional news magazines. Northern Ireland: Neighbours (r). (Ceefax)
7.00 Wogan. Terry talks to former hostage Jackie Mann and his wife Megan, and meets master artist Roger Ebboms (s)
7.30 Tomorrow's World. In this week's edition of the science magazine programme, Karina Kelly reports on the endangered giant green turtles in northern Australia. Judith Hann travels to Hampshire where she discovers a natural form of pest control. (Ceefax) (s). Northern Ireland: Spotlight
8.00 Sports. Regional drama series about the private and public lives of five part-time police constables in the Midlands. (Ceefax) (s)
8.55 Points of View presented by Anna Robinson (s)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News with Martyn Lewis. (Ceefax). Regional news and weather



Arresting the drug barons: a DEA agent with his catch (9.30pm)

9.30 DEA: Undercover Eddie
CHOICE: A six-part fly-on-the-wall documentary series on the work of the US Drug Enforcement Administration begins with this tale of 'Undercover Eddie', a pushy young agent with a ponytail who gets his kicks from infiltrating the ranks of dangerous drug barons, then moving in for the kill. Dealer Sam Ensel, head of an international Nigerian drug-trafficking organisation, is his latest potential prison inmate. "I'm counting on this guy to come through for me - my victory, his demise", says Eddie with a smirk. It's a messy first programme, devoid of a narrator and consequently hard to follow, although the sporadic subtitles help to explain the drug-dealer. Still, there is plenty of action as the hidden cameras reveal both the secret meetings between Eddie and the unsuspecting baddies, and, on about Day 105, the "big sting", when the villains get their come-uppence. (Ceefax) (s)
10.30 Sportsnight. Desmond Lynam introduces championship boxing from Leeds Town Hall as Henry Wharton defends his Commonwealth Super-Middleweight title against Lou Gent. Plus, a look at Eddie Jagan's winning formula one racing team, which includes Andrea De Cesaris and Bertrand Gachot, a report from the British boxing annual awards presentation and the latest football news and results
11.20 Film: Hard Contract (1989). Tense, verbose drama starring James Coburn as an enigmatic professional assassin who falls in love with an unsuspecting Lee Remick. Directed by S. Lee Pogostin. Love with Film 91 with Barry Norman; 11.50 Film: Hard Contract
1.05am Weather

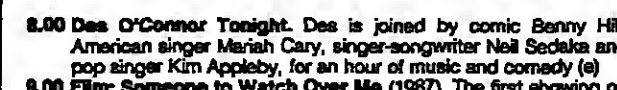
8.00 News 8.15 Six Faces of Royalty: Charles II (r)
8.30 The Man Who Invented the 20th Century. Charles Parson (r)
9.00 Daytime on TV. It Doesn't Have to Hurt (r). (Ceefax) 9.10 Stop and Think (r) 9.30 Diaz Tennes (r) 9.45 You and Me (r) 10.00 Thinkabout Science 10.15 Search Out Science (r) 10.35 Q & A (s) 10.40 Around Scotland: Clearances (s). Northern Ireland: Ceefax 11.00 Words and Pictures (r) 11.15 English Time: Writing 11.25 Teaching Today: Language in the National Curriculum (r) 12.05 TV6: Tears From My Soul 12.30 Lifeschool: Careers (r) 12.55 España Viva (r) 1.20 Postman Pat (r) 1.35 Jimbo and the Jet Set (r) 1.40 Zig Zag. The Vikings followed by You and Me (r) 2.15 Holiday Outings. An adventure holiday in the Lake District 2.20 Craftsman: At a Printmaker's Workshop 2.35 Country File (r) 3.00 News and weather followed by The Psychic Teaspoon (r) 3.50 News, regional news and weather
4.00 The Nut House. American comedy series (r)
4.25 The History Men. Bryan McNeely visits Hadrian's Wall (r)
4.30 Thriftful Pursuit. Television version of the board game (r). (Ceefax)
5.00 Relatively Speaking. Mevins Nicholson talks to Dame Barbara Cartland, and her daughter Raine, the Countess of Athlone
5.30 A Question of Sport (r). (Ceefax) (s)
6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation. (Ceefax)
6.50 Def: It's Rough Guide to the World's Journeys - Indonesia. Magenta de Vine and Sankha Gupta journey to Bali via the Indonesian capital of Jakarta and across the island of Java to Sumatra
7.40 Def: It's Rapid. Antoine de Caunes talks to David Bowie and members of his new band, Tin Machine, in the first of a new series of the energetic rock show
8.10 Timewatch: Harvest of Iron - The Watch on the Somme
CHOICE: In part one of two programmes about the first world war, German writer Ludwig Harg travels to the Somme in an attempt to work out why his father could not talk about his experiences as a soldier at the Front. One cannot help thinking he might have been better talking to German veterans, if there are any left, or at least seeking out some revealing soldiers' diaries. Instead, this film, made for British and French television, seems to be much more concerned with the Gallic point of view. It is no less fascinating for that, as it gives vivid reminiscences about everyday life in occupied France, the odd shooting on the streets, the cartoons of wounded soldiers - "you could follow the trail of blood" - and the nagging annoyances such as the German bread, "like gingerbread". It is a beautifully made film marrying interviews with well-chosen archive footage, but at the end of it we are left with only flimsy theories about the resilience of Harg's father
9.00 The Watch on the Somme. (Ceefax) (s)
A war correspondent's story about blood donations (r)



Involved in a dirty business: Michael Gough in Belfast (9.25pm)

9.25 Children of the North: The Killing of Yesterday's Children
CHOICE: Adapted from the novels of M.S. Power and directed by Defiance of the Heavies David Drury, this four-part Northern Ireland thriller tells of an intriguing story with the chopsticks showing equal potential for treachery. The only half-breed person, Arthur Apple, a visionary madman expertly played by Michael Gough, is quick to warn us how things are; he sees, he says, "an awful deception invading the souls of man..." Apple is swiftly recruited by the IRA to run a betting shop in Belfast laundering IRA funds, and soon ends up lying through his teeth like everyone else. Meanwhile, the Army, the RUC, the IRA and MI6 fight with each other in preparation for the IRA's next move. All make deals together. It's heavy-handed and over-the-top in parts, as when the IRA hitman (Adrian Dunbar) gets stuck into his tame prostitute while running through past murders in his mind, but it's the machievellian politics that make this worth watching. (Ceefax) (s)
10.20 Fifth Column. A personal opinion about a topical subject
10.30 Newsnight with Jeremy Paxman
11.15 The Late Show. Journalist Ben Woolly reports on Tokyo's struggle to find a new electoral identity 11.55 Weather

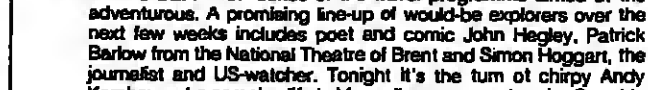
6.00 TV-am
9.25 Jeopardy! Quiz in which Steve Jones supplies the answers and the contestants have to provide the questions 9.55 Thames News and weather
10.00 The Time... The Place... Live topical discussion programme
10.40 This Morning. Judy Finnigan and Richard Madeley present the family magazine programme, including at 11.00 Children's Health. A new weekly six-part series in which Chris Steele puts childhood ailments under the microscope, including at 10.55 News headlines 11.55 Thames News and weather
12.10 Allsorts. Children's entertainment (s)
12.30 News with John Suchet. (Oracle) Weather 1.10 Thames News and weather
1.20 Home and Away. Australian family drama series. (Oracle)
1.50 A Country Practice. Australian medical drama series (s)
2.20 Rugby World Cup '91. Frank Buckle introduces live coverage from Cardiff of the play-off for third and fourth places between Scotland and New Zealand, the two losing semi-finalists. Plus a look at how the finalists England and Australia are preparing for the big match on Saturday
4.15 Children's ITV beginning with Rolf's Cartoon Club. Wacadey's Tim Mallet reveals his favourite cartoons 4.40 Time Riders. Third in a four-part science fiction series. Starring Haydn Gwynne
5.10 Blockbusters. Bob Holness hosts the quiz for teenagers
5.40 News with Fiona Armstrong. (Oracle) Weather
5.55 Thames Help. Jackie Sprockley investigates canoeing
6.00 Home and Away (r). (Oracle)
6.30 Thames News. (Oracle)
7.00 This is Your Life. Michael Aspel opens his red book to reveal the past life of a unsuspecting celebrity (s)
7.30 Coronation Street. (Oracle)



Comic vision: Benny Hill in a line-up of famous guests (8.00pm)

8.00 Des O'Connor Tonight. Des is joined by comic Benny Hill, American singer Mariah Carey, singer-songwriter Neil Sedaka and pop singer Kim Appleby, for an hour of music and comedy (s)
8.00 Film: Someone to Watch Over Me. The first showing on network television for this stylish romantic thriller about a New York cop (Tom Berenger), whose loyalties are divided between his loving wife (Lorraine Bracco) and the wealthy socialite (Mimi Rogers) he is assigned to protect. Directed by Ridley Scott, whose film credits include Alien, Back Runner and Thelma & Louise. (Oracle)
10.00 News at Ten with Julia Somerville and Fiona Armstrong. (Oracle) Weather 10.30 Thames News and weather
10.40 Film: Someone to Watch Over Me. Continued
11.35 Rugby World Cup '91. David Bohn introduces highlights of this afternoon's third and fourth place play-off from Cardiff
12.30am Film: Seizure (1985). Lockhouse made-for-television espionage film about young Russian spies who are trained to use their brains as a means of observing information. Starring Linda Hamilton, Geena Davis, Sally Kellerman and James Franciscus. Directed by Don Taylor
2.15 America's Top Ten. Tom Puett presents the latest chart sounds, pop videos, news and gossip from the United States (s)
2.40 Videofashion
3.10 Quiz Night. Tom Robbins presents the pub and club team competition
3.40 Newsnight with Ily Baskerville. The newsreader Sandy Gall tells of Brough Scott about the books that he is currently reading, including a thriller by John Le Carré and the Michelin Guide to France
4.10 Motorsport. The British Sidecar Motor-cross Grand Prix
4.40 Fifty Years On (b/w). Archive newsreels from late October 1941
5.00 Witness to Survival. Marie Hanson/The Rodriguez Family. Two courageous tales about ordinary people struggling to survive
5.30 ITN Morning News with Phil Norman. Ends at 8.00

6.00 The Channel 4 Daily
9.25 Schools
12.00 Profiles of Nature: Life in a Pond. A revealing insight into the micro-organisms that can be found above and below the surface of a fresh water pond
12.30 Business Daily. News and analysis from the City
1.00 Sesame Street. Pre-school learning series. The guest is the actor Robin Williams
2.00 Faith, Hope and Charity: Revelation. Third of a 10-part series on religious issues. Ronald Eyre examines the idea of the Revelation with Dr Ruth Page, a Christian, and Dr Zaid Badawi, a Muslim (s)
2.30 Film: Edison, the Man (1940, b/w). Romantic biopic, starring Spencer Tracy as Thomas Edison, the inventor of the electric light. Rita Johnson stars as his wife. Directed by Clarence Brown
4.30 Fifteen-to-One. William G. Stewart hosts the quick-fire quiz (s)



Smiles of success: Oprah Winfrey, Michael J. Fox (5.00pm)

5.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show. The baby-faced actor Michael J. Fox, star of the television comedy series Family Ties and films such as Back to the Future, talks about his career and family (s)
5.55 Wilko the Wisp. Cartoon (r)
6.00 Kate and Allie: Kate and the Cab Driver. American comedy series about two American divorcees. Starring Susan Saint James and Jane Curtin
6.30 Tonight with Jonathan Ross live from the Ed Sullivan Theatre in New York (s)
7.00 Channel 4 News with Jon Snow and Zeinab Badawi. (Teletext) Weather
7.50 Party Political Comment from a representative of the Green party
8.00 Brookside. Merseyside soap. (Teletext) (s)
8.30 Tinseltown
CHOICE: A new series of the travel programme aimed at the adventurous. A promising line-up of would-be explorers over the next few weeks includes poet and comic John Hegley, Patrick Barlow from the National Theatre of Brent and Simon Hoggart, the journalist and US-watcher. Tonight it's the turn of chirpy Andy Kershaw, who samples life in Mongolia, the great untamed Genghis Khan, now hoping to attract tourists by invoking the Genghis Khan name wherever possible. First stop is the industrialised capital Ulan Bator, which Kershaw promptly compares to Sheffield. Then it's off to the country where he has much more fun playing Frisbee in the Gobi desert and giggling at a boy riding a horse while carrying a sheep, then dropping the sheep. It is not the most reverent of approaches but it is certainly entertaining and there are nuggets of history and sensible comment along the way (s)
9.00 Tinseltown. Sir Fitzroy Maclean visits the former Soviet republic of Georgia and talks to Sviatoslav Gushchinskii, Georgia's first elected president, among others
9.45 Short and Curious: A Nice Arrangement. Meera Syal's short drama in which Meena (Tanika Rodrigues) leaves it until her wedding day to decide whether to marry the fiancé arranged for her by her Asian family or to stay with her boyfriend (r). (Teletext)
10.00 The Golden Girls. Stand By Your Man. Addictive comedy with the four Miami matrons
10.30 Paul Merton: The Series. The deadpan comedian rounds off the series by showing us the worst thing that can happen at the dentist, in an ambulance and at the disco (s)
11.00 US: The Bofofos. The penultimate episode in the series on immigrant families in Britain meets Ghana-born Sam Bofo and his family, who live in London's East End
11.45 Tonight with Jonathan Ross from the core of the Big Apple (r) (s)
12.15am Film: The Jewel Thief (1951). Continuing the season of Indian tales from the Bombay film studios, Shammi Kapoor stars in a colourful musical as a rich boy on holiday in Kashmir, who falls in love with a poor girl (Saira Banu) and has to deal with the disapproval of his parents. In Hindi with English subtitles. Directed by Subch Mukherjee. Ends at 2.50

TV VARIATIONS
ANGLIA
As London except: 6.25-7.00pm Anglia News
BORDER
As London except: 5.10-5.40pm Home and Away 6.00 Lookaround Wednesday 6.30-7.00pm Blockbusters 12.30pm Home and Away 2.25pm Home and Away 3.10pm Home and Away 4.40pm Home and Away 5.10pm Home and Away 5.40pm Home and Away 6.00pm Home and Away 6.30pm Home and Away 7.00pm Home and Away 7.30pm Home and Away 8.00pm Home and Away 8.30pm Home and Away 9.00pm Home and Away 9.30pm Home and Away 10.00pm Home and Away 10.30pm Home and Away 11.00pm Home and Away 11.30pm Home and Away 12.00pm Home and Away 12.30pm Home and Away 1.00pm Home and Away 1.30pm Home and Away 2.00pm Home and Away 2.30pm Home and Away 3.00pm Home and Away 3.30pm Home and Away 4.00pm Home and Away 4.30pm Home and Away 5.00pm Home and Away 5.30pm Home and Away 6.00pm Home and Away 6.30pm Home and Away 7.00pm Home and Away 7.30pm Home and Away 8.00pm Home and Away 8.30pm Home and Away 9.00pm Home and Away 9.30pm Home and Away 10.00pm Home and Away 10.30pm Home and Away 11.00pm Home and Away 11.30pm Home and Away 12.00pm Home 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WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 30 1991

US district attorney says UK has not helped in BCCI enquiry

SFO accused of failing to co-operate

From SUSAN ELLICOTT in WASHINGTON

THE Serious Fraud Office has been accused of failing to co-operate with American investigators into alleged corruption and money-laundering by the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

In his second complaint about British institutions in four months, Robert Morgenthau, the Manhattan district attorney, told *The Times* that he spoke personally to the fraud office in mid-July but "did not get anywhere". He added that members of his staff were in London ten days ago, when they again offered senior SFO officials a chance to exchange information that could assist enquiries into the BCCI affair.

Mr Morgenthau, who began investigating the Luxembourg-based bank's dealings in 1989, has a reputation as one of America's toughest prosecutors. His office has no power of subpoena to obtain potentially useful documents or speak to would-be witnesses in Britain without British co-operation.

He said his staff have sent two letters proposing an exchange of information. One of his senior assistants also had lunch with Barbara Mills, the SFO's director, and Chris Dickson, the case controller on the BCCI investigation, he said. Yet the London office had "so far declined to make documents or witnesses available to us," Mr Morgenthau said. While his representatives "were treated courteously" in London, they were told that the fraud office could not co-operate with them until there

was "a deal with the liquidator". A spokeswoman for the fraud office yesterday declined to give details of the district attorney's alleged approaches or the alleged responses. "We do not feel it is appropriate for us to comment on what Mr Morgenthau said," she said after speaking to Mrs Mills. Mr Morgenthau said he did not understand why the roles of the liquidator and prosecutors should be linked. "We view our role as to find out what crimes have been committed and we thought that was the role of the SFO. We think that if we find where money has been stolen and where it has been hidden we could help recuperate assets," he said.

Investigators have estimated that BCCI may have defrauded depositors of between \$4 billion and \$15 billion between 1972 and last July, when banking regulators in eight countries, including Britain and America, closed down its operations after citing fraud and corruption. Depositors in Britain, among them local governments and families of Pakistani descent, are believed to have lost about \$4 billion.

The alleged stone-walling by the fraud office highlights the difficulty of co-ordinating the regulation of a bank for which no single central bank had supervision, even though the lending institution operated in about 70 countries in its heyday. The BCCI affair first made headlines last year, when a Florida judge fined it \$15 million for money-laundering after a guilty plea. It has since grown into what

Mr Morgenthau has called "the largest bank fraud in world financial history". BCCI was founded in the early Seventies by Agha Hasan Abedi, a Pakistani banker, and quickly became one of the biggest privately owned banks in the world.

"We have a lot of information which we think would be of help to the SFO," Mr Morgenthau said.

The fraud office was set up after the 1987 Criminal Justice Act to investigate and prosecute the most serious and complex frauds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. As an independent body, it has extensive investigative powers that go beyond the limits of anti-fraud police forces.

Mr Morgenthau's complaints about the fraud office came barely four months after he complained publicly that the Bank of England was refusing to help his office look into the BCCI affair. He said the Bank has been "extremely co-operative" since early June, or shortly after his published remarks. Attention in Washington has refocused on BCCI in past days after President Bush ordered an enquiry into the relationship between Ed Rogers, a former White House aide, and Sheikh Kamal Adham, a leading figure in the banking scandal. Mr Rogers worked under John Sumnu, Mr Bush's chief of staff, until this summer. Shortly after leaving, he was hired on a two-year contract worth \$600,000 by the sheikh, who is under investigation by American prosecutors for an alleged leading role in the BCCI affair.



Lunch, but "no co-operation": Barbara Mills, director of the Serious Fraud Office

CBI shows confidence up

By OUR INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BUSINESS signalled the beginning of the end of the recession yesterday when the latest large-scale survey from the Confederation of British Industry showed a marked boost in business confidence — but also revealed that the recession has hit even harder than has been recorded.

The CBI emphasised an uncomfortable dependence on exports, a worse than expected fall in demand and a forecast of a further 5,000 job losses in manufacturing per week as much as the surge in general business optimism.

David Wiglesworth, chairman of the CBI's economic situation committee, said: "We are now seeing the flickering signs of an upturn from what is still a severe recession."

The results of the CBI's survey showed that confidence among manufacturers has strengthened for the first time in three years, with 19 per cent more confident and 17 per cent less so than four months ago. With most, 64 per cent, still showing no change, this gives a balance of 2 per cent of those saying more over those saying less.

This represents a 28 percentage point change in confidence from the figure reported in the last CBI survey in July and is the biggest swing in confidence since 1982, and the biggest upward rise since 1963. The Treasury, using an unpublished seasonally adjusted series based on the CBI's data, said it was the biggest quarterly rise in confidence for 17 years. Though CBI economists remain sceptical about the value of such a rise in confidence as an indicator at a time when other indicators in the survey are showing the recession still firmly in place, they pointed out yesterday that previous similar rises in confidence at parallel points in previous recessions have been followed by actual increases in output and orders, and they expect that to happen again.

In the 1975 trough, output began to increase at the same time as confidence returned, though in the 1980 downturn output only started to grow some time afterwards. Companies are now expecting a slight improvement in orders over the next few months, though the CBI acknowledged yesterday that demand, output and employment had all fallen more than was expected at the time of the last survey in July.

Employment in particular is expected to worsen. The CBI said that manufacturing employment is estimated to have fallen by 69,000 in the third quarter, and was forecast to fall by a further 61,000 in the final three months.

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City mops up BAe loose ends

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT
FINANCIAL EDITOR

ALMOST 12 million shares in British Aerospace, a tenth of the group's rights issue, were placed among financial institutions at 357p by BAe's brokers yesterday, in an attempt to mop up loose holdings after the near-complete failure of the issue. Only 4.9 per cent of the £430 million new shares were taken up at the asking price of 380p, mainly by small shareholders.

BAe shares, which have stayed obstinately below the rights price, fell a further 6p to 363p with little sign of any stake-building. Kleiworth Benson, BAe's adviser, maintained that the extent of the failure reflected the underwriting mechanics and that the remaining 85 per cent of the issue should not be regarded as overhanging the market. Most of the sub-underwriters were existing BAe institutional shareholders who had chosen to take their new BAe shares via their underwriting allotment rather than by subscribing to the rights issue.

The bankers said they had sub-underwritten the issue largely by going to institutional shareholders and offering them 14 per cent commission, equivalent to 6p per share, to guarantee to take unwanted stock pro rata with their existing holdings.

When the issue seemed doomed to fail, underwriting shareholders decided not to subscribe, since they would get stock anyway through underwriting. They received new shares at a cost of 374p net of commission, although they are still showing a loss.

Kleiworth canvassed potential buyers and sellers yesterday morning before arranging the pooled placing through Hoare Govett and Kleiworth Securities, albeit at nearly 10p a share less than originally hoped.

Dealers' attempts to continue Monday's rally in share prices failed. An early mark-up pushed the FTSE 100 share index up 19 points early in the morning, but buyers stayed away. The index ended 5.2 points down at 2,553.3.

Stock market, page 26
Comment, page 27

TODAY IN BUSINESS

DOUBLE DIP



Norman Lamont says we are seeing the biggest rise in optimism for 17 years, but the British economy could face the threat of a double dip recession
Page 27

IN TINSLETOWN

Toshiba and C Itoh have become the latest to take a stake in Hollywood, revealing a joint partnership with Time Warner to control existing Time businesses in film, television and cable
Page 25

POST RESTANTE



Sir Bryan Nicholson, Post Office chairman, suggests that private competitors should charge 50p — against 24p charged for first-class letters at the moment
Page 25

JUST THE TONIC

SmithKline Beecham, the pharmaceutical group, benefited from a £12 million lawsuit payment in the third quarter to end-September. Sales of Tagamet, the peptic ulcer medicine, rose 5 per cent
Tempos, page 26

FROTHING OVER



Nobby Clark, the chairman of Foster's Brewery, has threatened to resign over not obtaining an assurance of support from the old chairman John Elliott
Page 24

THE POUND

US dollar
17195 (+0.0148)
German mark
29120 (+0.0004)
Exchange index
90.5 (+0.2)
Bank of England official
close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share
1954.0 (-7.3)
FT-SE 100
2563.3 (-5.2)
New York Dow Jones
3045.39 (-0.23)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave
25140.61 (+238.89)

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base 10 1/2%
3-month Interbank 10 1/2-10 3/4%
3-month eligible bills 10 1/2-10 3/4%
US Prime Rate 8%
Federal Funds 5 1/4%
3-month Treasury Bills 4 88-4 89%
30-year bonds 10 1/2-10 3/4%

CURRENCIES

London: New York
£ \$1 7227
£ DM 2 8113
£ Sfr 1 4589
£ FF 6 9455
£ Yen 225.52
£ Index 90.5
ECU 10 703225
£ ECU 1 422019

GOLD

London Fixing:
44 \$359.60 pm \$357.40
30-day 353.75-357.85 (2007 25-31.75)
New York:
30-day \$360.35-360.85

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Nov) \$21.65 bbl (\$21.65)

RETAIL PRICES

Pl: 134.8 September (1987-1990)
Denotes midday trading price

NEDC likely to reject Japan-style bargaining

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE government and Britain's employers are expected today to reject the idea that wage bargaining should be brought into line with more co-ordinated systems of pay negotiation used in countries such as Germany and Japan.

At a quarterly meeting of the tripartite National Economic Development Council, to be chaired by Michael Howard, employment secretary, both the government and the Confederation of British Industry will dismiss union suggestions that Britain should radically reform its system of pay bargaining.

Though the prime minister's office is known to have expressed interest in the idea of more co-ordinated pay bargaining, ministers are likely to be irritated by the issue's re-emergence at the NEDC. It will arise in discussion of a paper on wage bargaining and unemployment prepared by Dr Walter Eltis, NEDC's director-general. The confidential paper, a copy of which

has been seen by *The Times*, is a fairly neutral description and analysis of greater co-ordination on pay.

The document, entitled *The Labour Market Challenge that Faces Britain*, presents a choice: continuing to move away from national pay agreements, so that pay is increasingly based on performance; or introducing the sort of co-ordination that other economies have managed to establish.

The paper says the question, which approach is likelier to succeed in the particular conditions of the UK is "a matter of judgment."

It does, however, make the point that Britain's "intermediate" position — a relatively high degree of collective bargaining alongside moves towards pay decentralisation — "may be rather disadvantageous in comparison with a wholehearted pursuit of either regime."

The document is expected to prove too much for both the

government and the Confederation of British Industry. Mr Howard is likely to reject any moves towards greater pay co-ordination, with the support of John Banham, the CBI director-general.

Both regard such developments as a negative step away from pay decentralisation and relating pay directly to performance, and as a return to what they see as the discredited economic machinery of the Sixties and Seventies.

Dr Eltis's paper is critical of the high pay increases awarded to some senior company directors.

"Telephone number salaries can have significant knock-on effects," it says. "The rewards of those who can turn round companies can go on to become the norm for those administering going concerns of the same size, even if they are being run rather unsuccessfully, so the link between pay and performance at the top can become tenuous."

Barclays responds to charges

By NEIL BENNETT
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

BARCLAYS Bank is planning to launch a new code of practice next month, designed to answer criticism of its service in small businesses and win business from high street rivals.

Confidential documents from the bank show that the code will offer more services to small businesses than Midland's business charter issued two weeks ago.

A memo to branch managers says the bank wants "to improve our competitive position by introducing a code which is more attractive in businesses than that of the other banks".



Quinlan: more services
This will give companies three to complain about the charges with their manager before they are debited from their accounts. Until now banks have only supplied a breakdown of charges on request.

The new measure, in come into force at the end of next year, will cost Barclays an estimated £3 million a year, but it plans to absorb the cost without increasing charges. In

its charter, Midland said it was considering ways of introducing invoicing for cheques and other means of payment.

Sir John Quinlan, Barclays chairman, is producing the bank's new code in response to a request from the Chancellor last July. This came after the Treasury and the Bank of England had reviewed the banks' treatment of small businesses.

The Treasury received more than 1,000 letters of complaint about the banks during its enquiry, and Mr Lamont decided that the codes were needed to improve their service. He said that the codes should ensure that companies received a full tariff of all bank charges, and be given adequate warning of any change.

The Chancellor has given all the banks until the end of the year to produce their new codes, but they were given

new impetus last week when Sir Gordon Borrie, director-general of Fair Trading, accused the banks of being "high-handed and insensitive" to their dealings with small businesses.

Barclays' code goes further than these recommendations. All the bank's tariffs will be confirmed to writing, and businesses will be given one month's notice of any change in charges or interest rates. Companies will also be sent details of Barclays' complaints procedure in case of disputes with their branch.

The measures fall short of demands from small business pressure groups, however. The Forum of Private Businesses has called for legal contracts to be introduced between banks and their customers to safeguard the small businesses interests.

Comment, page 27

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Salomon staff face pay cut to help with legal costs

FROM PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

SALOMON Brothers, the disgraced Wall Street investment bank, has told staff they must take a pay cut to help meet the legal expenses likely to stem from its unlawful attempts to rig prices in Treasury bond auctions.

The bank expects to have to pay out at least \$200 million in fines and other penalties, a sum it charged against third-quarter profits, which rose after tax and other payments from \$79 million to \$85 million.

Had the previous year's staff pay and benefit payments been maintained, the bank would have made a \$12 million loss in the quarter.

Salomon Brothers has cut the total cost of its compensation and benefits by 58 per cent from \$509 million to \$212 million and says that

total staff pay this year will be lower than last.

The bank is renowned on Wall Street for routinely paying multimillion-dollar bonuses to executives, and Warren Buffett, the new chairman, says some of these had been paid irrespective of whether executives had contributed significantly to profits performance.

In a statement to shareholders yesterday, Mr Buffett described Salomon's pay structure as "irrational in certain crucial respects". He said that last year when the securities arm of the firm earned a 10 per cent return on equity — far below the average American business — 106 individuals were paid \$1 million or more. And when group profits were flat, total pay jumped by more than \$120

million. Mr Buffett now wants to pay a greater proportion of the bonuses in Salomon shares which must be held for at least five years.

He said: "Our pay for performance philosophy will undoubtedly cause some managers to leave... Were an abnormal number of people to leave the firm, the results would not necessarily be bad. In the end, we must have people to match our principles, not the reverse."

A spokesman for Salomon said last night that the bank had not yet set bonuses for this year. Salomon's bonus year runs to the end of September while its financial year matches the calendar.

Salomon staff usually know the extent of bonuses by this time.

The bank is being investigated by four government agencies and faces almost 40 legal actions after admitting unlawful dealings in eight American Treasury bond auctions between last December and May.

It claims to have made very little profit from the deals. Of a total \$19.7 million made in eight auctions, only \$3.3 million to \$4.6 million was made from bids that were unauthorised.

Mr Buffett says from what he knows so far, there were only a few employees who behaved "egregiously".

Salomon has sacked Paul Mozzer, its chief Treasury bond trader, who had collected \$11 million in pay and bonuses in three years to 1990, and Thomas Murphy, his deputy. Four other top executives, including John Gutfreund, Mr Buffett's predecessor, have resigned.

Salomon shares were unchanged at \$26.125 in early trading on Wall Street yesterday but climbed \$1.375 on Monday shortly before Salomon took what its staff described as the unconventional step of releasing its quarterly figures as copy for a double-page spread advertisement in three prominent newspapers. This was about 15 hours before they were generally available to US investors via the New York Stock Exchange.

A spokesman for the bank said: "We took ads in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post because we wanted to say what we wanted to say. We delivered the copy to the New York Times at 6pm last night. The action was cleared with the lawyers."

Salomon's profit figures were running in London well before American investors had woken up and before the 9.30am start to trading in New York.



Morning assembly: Sir Dennis Weatherstone, chairman, said the bank's new building gave the means to manage risk into the next century

JP Morgan goes to school in the City

By NEIL BENNETT
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

ROBIN Leigh-Pemberton, the governor of the Bank of England, officially opened the new London headquarters of JP Morgan in the former City of London School.

The American investment bank's new building is an emblematic commitment to the City. Four years and £400 million were spent redeveloping the school. The bank has reacquired £220 million by selling 52.5 per cent of the lease to Sunimoto, the Japanese bank.

The focus of the building is the marble great hall, built in 1881. The front of the building is listed and may not be altered, though every room now has a new purpose. The headmaster's study has become a dining room.

The rear has been rebuilt to house a 280-seat trading room. In all, 1,000 staff will be housed in an area of 450,000 sq ft.

In his speech, Mr Leigh-Pemberton reminded his audience that the bank was founded in London in 1838, 23 years before it opened in New York.

Sir Dennis Weatherstone, the bank's chairman, said the building offered the means of managing risk into the 21st century. "The lesson of the last few years," he said, "is that risk can and must be managed, not just avoided."

Advertising slump puts Thames £4m into red

By MARTIN WALLER

TWO of the unsuccessful bidders in the independent television franchise round, Thames TV and Television South West Holdings, have unveiled financial figures that show the scars of the advertising downturn in the industry.

Thames has reported a £4.04 million loss before tax, against profits of £10.3 million last year, and slashed the interim dividend from 5.15p to 2.5p. The group is blaming heavy expenditure on programmes transmitted and sold, which rose from £77.4 million to £91.5 million.

This was largely an accident of timing, said Derek Hunt, the finance director, as four substantial drama series were transmitted during the first half, the costs of all of which have to be taken immediately.

They would be offset in the second half by strong programme sales, and Thames is forecasting "a substantial

operating profit" from the final six months of the year.

Net advertising revenue fell 8.3 per cent during the first half, and there was an additional impact from the Gulf war on revenue and the costs of Independent Television News.

Richard Dunn, the chief executive, said Thames would be maximising future earnings for shareholders as the franchise expired. This is likely to mean the cancellation of some local programming, although the broadcaster will keep to its contractual minimum level agreed with the Independent Television Commission, the industry watchdog.

Thorn EMI owns almost 59 per cent of Thames TV, and there has been speculation that it may eventually launch a bid for the minority shares. The market does not believe a buyout will come immediately, as under City

takeover rules an approach would have to be at the 250p level at which Thorn offered to buy shares in February. Thames shares fell 4p to 197p yesterday.

Thames plans to continue as an independent producer. TV South West has yet to state its future course, but it has announced pre-tax profits down from £4.7 million to £146,000 in the 12 months to end-July. The reported figure would have been three times as large, said Sir Brian Bailey, the chairman, but for the cost of mounting the franchise bid.

The company, which has changed its financial year end, is paying a 2p second interim dividend as well as a 0.77p special payout. It plans a 3p final, which will give a 7p total for the 17 months to end-December, maintaining dividend payments at their previous levels despite the profits downturn.

Whisky bid is finely balanced

By MARTIN BARROW

THE takeover battle for Invergordon Distillers, which closes at 1pm today, appeared finely balanced last night after Whyte & Mackay claimed to speak for 41.5 per cent, but parties considered supportive of the board mopped up more than 1 million shares.

Robert Fleming, the merchant bank advising Invergordon, and de Zoete & Bevan acquired 656,000 and 434,000 shares respectively at the offer price of 275p. Whyte & Mackay dismissed the purchases as "a spoiling tactic".

Funds associated with Flemings already speak for 15 per cent of Invergordon while BZW Investment Management holds about 1.5 per cent. Whyte & Mackay increased its own shareholding to 39.2 per cent and confirmed that it had received acceptances in respect of 2.3 per cent for its cash offer of 275p, giving it control over 41.5 per cent.

Compete at 50p a letter, says PO

By OUR INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE government should reduce the monopoly threshold for letter posting initially to 50p, the Post Office suggested yesterday, with the option of cutting it further once the impact of the reduction on postal services had been examined.

The suggestion, made by Sir Bryan Nicholson, PO chairman, is the first time that the Post Office has publicly put forward a concrete proposal on the monopoly price level since John Major announced in the citizen's charter in July that the present £1 minimum for posting a letter with a firm competing with the Royal Mail would come "much closer" to the price of first class mail, currently 24p.

Since then, the PO and the trade department have been in regular discussions on the charge level, which in effect gives the Royal Mail a monopoly on handling letters. A lower charge will expose the Post Office to competition.

Ministers have not made their views clear, although both the trade department and the PO Users National Council, the industry's watchdog, were made aware of the contents of Sir Bryan's statement well in advance of his making it yesterday at a conference in London on the future of European postal services.

Edward Leigh, industry minister, confirmed the gradualist approach proposed by the PO. Speaking at the same conference, he said there

would be "no big bang" for the PO, and while he would not put a government figure on the monopoly threshold, he said: "Our aim is to reduce it until it reaches the minimum level that is necessary to allow the Post Office to meet its obligations."

Sir Bryan told the conference there was no customer benefit to be gained from throwing caution to the wind, and proposed a step-by-step approach: "After an initial reduction, perhaps to 50p, new entrant activity could be reviewed to see its effect on customers as a whole, and further reductions made if appropriate."

While he said there was strong support for choice and competition, he gave a warning that it would be wrong if any group were penalised in terms of cost or quality as a result of giving an advantage to any other group, "however vociferous they may be". Some potential private couriers have been lobbying both the PO and the government hard on the monopoly threshold.

The government intends to create a new regulator for the PO, already dubbed "Ofpost", along the lines of similar regulators for BT, British Gas and others.

Also at the conference, the UCU communications union released the results of a Mori poll carried out for the union which it said showed that privatisation of the Royal Mail would be unpopular.

Hello Tosh — Time Warner gets a Toshiba link-up in deal worth \$1bn

FROM JOANNA PITMAN
IN TOKYO

TOSHIBA Corporation, one of Japan's most conservative industrial groups, has succumbed to the siren lights of Hollywood. With C Itoh, Japan's largest trading company, Toshiba has announced a \$1 billion investment in a new entertainment company that will control the film and television production and distribution, cable system operations and cable programming of Time Warner.

The investment in Time Warner, whose chairman is Steven Ross, is conspicuous for its caution in comparison with the acquisitive approach of two rival Japanese electronics companies. When Sony Corporation bought Columbia Pictures in September 1989, it paid \$3.4 billion. Last December, Matsushita Electric purchased MCA, the parent of Universal Studios, for \$6.1 billion. Both paid for outright control and entertained visions of cross-fertilising the genius of Japanese electronic engineers with the artistic magic of Hollywood.

According to reports in Japan, Time Warner, which has \$8.7 billion debts, tried to persuade Toshiba and C Itoh to make a cash injection on the scale of the Sony and the Matsushita deals.

Hiroshi Nakada, an electronics industry economist at Long Term Credit Bank, said: "Time Warner is also desperate for cash. Its own Japanese partners will not see dividends for some time."

But the kind of ill-defined synergy between hardware and software that Sony and Matsushita reputedly sought



Looking to Japan: Steven Ross, of Time Warner

evidently did not appeal to the chief executives of Toshiba and C Itoh.

While they may have enjoyed Warner's *Batman*, which took Tokyo by storm, most Toshiba men have traditionally been more interested in the inner workings of nuclear reactors and semiconductor than dramas from Tinseltown. Their finely negotiated deal will give them access to Time Warner's cable and pay-television businesses, without their having to take risks on the fortunes of lavish silver screen epics for their profits.

Unlike its rivals, Toshiba is not interested in much more than a loose link with Warner's film-making business. It is cable television where Toshiba would like to tap Time Warner's experience as America's second-largest cable operator, and where Toshiba is predicting future

alliance with C Itoh is unusual. Toshiba is tied into the Mitsui Group, one of the original industrial combines or *zaibatsu* that have existed since before the war on the basis of mutual cross-shareholdings between member companies.

The Mitsui Group includes Mitsui Bussan, one of C Itoh's biggest trading rivals. In a nation where the fiercely competitive *zaibatsu* still exert enormous influence on corporate relationships, such a blatant breaking of allegiances is remarkable.

Both companies are well positioned for the near term future. Joichi Aoi, Toshiba's president, believes that consumer electronics, the core business of both Sony and Matsushita, has been going through a decline. Few believe this trend will be reversed for some time. At Toshiba, consumer products account for 20 per cent of sales, as opposed to 40 per cent at Matsushita and 80 per cent at Sony.

Toshiba's engineers are forging ahead with new developments in its traditional semiconductor, electronics and computing businesses. They have a capital spending budget of ¥250 billion (£1.1 billion) for the current fiscal year and ¥272 billion for research and development.

While Toshiba would have had little difficulty in raising the capital for an all-out purchase of Time Warner, the cautious and limited nature of Toshiba's investment, shared with C Itoh, reflects the extent to which corporate values differ between Toshiba and Sony and Matsushita, its electronics rivals.

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TEMPUS

SmithKline Beecham still finds the going tough

SMITHKLINE Beecham has cut its gearing from 100 per cent to 56 per cent so far in 1991, and is on target to bring it down to 50 per cent by the end of the year.

The company continues to improve trading margins. In the third quarter to end-September, these rose by 1.2 percentage points to 22.6 per cent, and Robert Bauman, chief executive, is pleased that earnings momentum is being maintained.

But the group has not yet addressed the gap between its Siamese share twins, the American-British holding remains 60:40, the equity units are not yet included in Standard & Poor's 500 index, and analysts focus on sales, not profits.

That said, third-quarter pre-tax profits, at £252 million against £218 million, were flattened by a £12 million lawsuit part payment, and sales strength in pharmaceuticals has been eroded by weakness in consumer brands.

Overall sales growth at comparable exchange rates was 4 per cent in the third quarter, compared with 5 per cent in the first and 6 per cent in the second. Trading conditions remain tough in several markets, so pre-tax profits forecasts remain at £1 billion (£860 million) for the year to end-December. That puts the shares, up 12p at 750p, on a prospective multiple of 15.9.

Until there is hard evidence that the company is getting closer to its sales growth target of 8 to 10 per cent, the shares will not be aggressively bought.

Macarthy

MACARTHY effectively surrendered its independence the day it recommended an offer by Lloyds Chemist. But having determined that its days are numbered it becomes more difficult to establish who the eventual executor will be - and on what terms.

Shareholders cannot claim



Pleased at momentum: Robert Bauman, of SB

a lack of choice. They may accept an all-shares offer by Grampian Holdings, which has become the target of almost hysterical attacks by Macarthy, or they can await the outcome of a monopolies commission enquiry in the hope that either Unichem or Lloyds Chemists may renew their offers.

A third option is to sell in the market and lock into the current price of 271p. Pre-bid, the shares traded at around 160p and if the Grampian offer lapses the downside is considerable.

Macarthy has been contesting bids since mid-May and it is hard to accept that business has not suffered. It failed to issue a profit fore-

cast in its defence even though its year-end is September 30, raising doubts about its recent performance.

The MMC has seized the chance to consider not just the bid but the whole issue of pharmaceutical distribution. Even if Lloyds, Macarthy's preferred choice, is allowed to re-bid there could be strings attached that would reduce the attraction.

Grampian's offer values Macarthy at 285p a share, against Lloyds' mostly paper bid, which was worth 306p at its peak. Cautious investors should sell in the market but Grampian's paper will appeal to the longer-term view.

Spotlight turns on supermarkets as price war starts building up

THE supermarket chains were back under the City spotlight amid claims that the food price war has intensified with margins continuing to be eroded. This time, it seems the supermarkets' suppliers have added to their woes by cutting prices in an effort to boost their own sales.

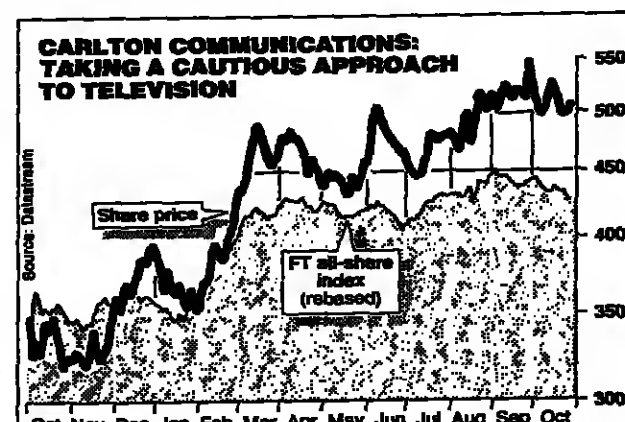
Heinz of America started the ball rolling by reducing the price of its baked beans and other tinned foods. Mars, the big American confectionery group, has also decided to cut the price of several brands of pet foods. Dealers believe that British food suppliers may soon be forced to follow.

Hillsdown, 2p dearer at 202p, and Dalgety, 1p cheaper at 380p, are regarded as being the most vulnerable to increased competition. Analysts say that pressure is now growing on the retailers to cut their prices, putting more pressure on margins.

There were falls for Tesco, 6p to 230p, Morrison Supermarkets, 2p to 285p, Iceland Frozen Foods, 4p to 396p, and Kwik Save, 7p to 564p. J Sainsbury was another weak market, losing 13p to 331p with one broker said to be urging its clients to switch to the rival Argill, 3p lighter at 273p. Dealers said the Sainsbury price had also been depressed by a line of 2.5 million shares going through the market at 329p. Sainsbury is due to report its interim figures next week.

Meanwhile, hopes that the rest of the equity market could extend Monday's sharp gains proved short-lived. An early mark-up of almost 20 points failed because of lack of support. The CBI industrial trends survey showed business confidence growing but carried the warning that the recovery was still in the early stages.

The FT-SE 100 index eventually closed 5.2 lower at 2,553.3 with the turnover of 563 million shares swollen by several large placings. Government securities sported



CARLTON COMMUNICATIONS: TAKING A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO TELEVISION

gains of 3% at the longer end, cheered by the brighter outlook.

SmithKline Beecham rose 19p to 763p after third-quarter figures showing profits climbing from £218 million to £252 million. Glaxo, which last week received approval from the American Food and Drug Administration to market

Northern Foods, the newest member of the FT-SE 100, is finally showing signs of running out of steam after its recent celebratory run, with the price falling 13p to 534p. The speculation persists that Northern is poised to pay Grand Metropolitan, down 6p at 845p, about £250 million for Express Dairy.

Imigran, its anti-migraine drug, in an injectable form, made headway again. The shares, in their new, slimmed-down form, jumped 27p to 787p, helped by American buying.

Exchange sold BTR's holding of 7.5 million Hawker shares.

Investigation was steady at 265p with Kleinwort Benson, the broker, continuing to bid 275p a share for stock. Today is the deadline for Whyte & Mackay's bid and it looks like being a closely run affair.

Shares in the 12 electricity distributors in England and Wales were generally easier in line with the market. Smith New Court, the broker, has produced a study, advising a review of the institutions' portfolios.

Although a long-term buyer of the sector generally, SNC highlights the potential of Yorkshire, down 3p at 284p, Southern, off 4p at 249p, Midlands, unchanged at 258p, and Northern, 2p higher at 270p.

Shares in the 12 electricity distributors in England and Wales were generally easier in line with the market. Smith New Court, the broker, has produced a study, advising a review of the institutions' portfolios.



Green: franchise hopes

Benson, which remains a strong buyer of the sector.

British Aerospace fell 6p to 363p on confirmation that its controversial, £432 million rights issue had been a flop.

After the failure of the Hillsdown and BAE fundraising exercises, all eyes will now be on the £350 million rights issue from Asda, the

troubled supermarket chain. Shares of Asda slipped 19p to 384p as a line of 9 million shares went through the market. By the close of business, 23 million shares had changed hands. There is growing concern that the bulk of its issue will be left with the underwriters.

Marks and Spencer fell 8p to 275p before the half-year figures today. Gestetner, the office equipment group, tumbled 26p to 158p as the group gave warning that profits in the current year to October will fail to match expectations. TV-am, the independent tele-

vision broadcasting company, rose 3p to 102p. The company's deputy managing director, Tony Vickers, has been appointed director of group sales and marketing for BSkyB. His 30-strong sales team at TV-am will take on the responsibility of selling BSkyB's airtime.

Thames Television, which has just lost the London weekday franchise to Carlton Communications, where Michael Green is the chairman, fell 4p to 187p as the company dropped into the red. The group has reported an interim pre-tax loss of £4 million, against a profit for the corresponding period of £10.3 million. The company blamed a drop in advertising revenues. The second half is expected to see a recovery.

Carlton saw analysts this week to detail its plans for its London weekday franchise. The group will have to spend £100 million between now and January 1993, but stressed this was not risk money and that its business plan saw profits in the first year and full pay-back by end-1996. The company does not intend becoming involved in high-risk undertakings and will only undertake projects which have been previously commissioned.

Talks continue with LWT, the incumbent and successful London weekend franchiseholder, about the sharing of facilities, but no deal has been reached yet. Carlton strengthened 5p to 510p.

Petson, the hand-held computer group, jumped 12p to 64p on learning that its new computer range Series 3 had won an award in America. The group now has plans to substantially increase production above the current level of 4,000 units per month.

British Thornton was requested on the big board at 11p after a three-week suspension after several acquisitions and a rights issue. The shares were previously quoted on the USM.

MICHAEL CLARK

Half-time loss for Acorn Computer

A SHORTFALL in education expenditure, destocking and higher interest costs took their toll at Acorn Computer, the US micro-computer maker in which Olivetti has an 80 per cent stake.

Acorn slid into the red with a pre-tax loss of £420,000 in the six months to end-June, compared with a £42,000 profit. Sales fell 19.2 per cent to £17.8 million. There is a loss per share of 0.6p (earnings of 0.1p). Once again, there is no interim dividend.

Radamec profit

Radamec Group made a pre-tax profit of £56,000 in the first half of this year (loss of £78,000) in spite of turnover falling from £6.09 million to £5.65 million. Earnings per share were 0.3p (loss of 0.4p). Once again, there is no interim dividend. Radamec expects to remain profitable in the second half.

Bradford rises

Bradford Property Trust reports a 7.3 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £11.2 million for the six months to October 5. The interim dividend is increased to 2p (1.7p), matching the increase in earnings per share.

Order for Racal

Racal-Datacom, a subsidiary of the Racal Electronics group facing a £700 million hostile bid from Williams Holdings, has won a £1 million managed modern network order from Posten, the Swedish post office.

Coats' sell-off

Coats Viyella is continuing its refocusing with the disposal of the Tootal Apparel and Tootal Fashion divisions and Tootal Clothing to their management for £3.3 million.

FT-SE 100 VOLUMES			
Vol '000	Vol '000	Vol '000	Vol '000
Abbey Nat 3,412	Cardbury 1,908	Lowtho 1,788	Royal Bank 1,017
Ad-Lyons 1,168	CU 742	Lucas 943	Royal Ind 2,982
Anglia 648	Courtauld 236	M&S 2,412	Sainsbury 6,681
ASDA 23,871	Enterprise 34	Maxwell 175	Scott & N 6,681
ASD Foods 245	Entenprise 376	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
Avon 3,521	Eurochem 318	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
Avon Wdg 798	Fortis 818	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BAA 1,885	Gen Acc 1,358	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BET 1,489	GEC 2,184	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BTH 3,018	Glaxo 1,984	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BAT 1,043	Grand Met 1,420	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
Bearings 3,108	Hawker 957	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BICC 496	Guinness 2,821	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BK Scotland 724	Heron 957	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BSI 641	Hilldown 2,439	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BSG 201	ICI 525	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BSA 1,959	Inchcape 943	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Airways 2,910	Kingsfisher 781	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Airways 5,241	Lassco 787	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Petrol 7,454	Lend Sec 3,191	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Steel 3,521	Land Sec 3,191	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Telecom 3,521	L&Q 283	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BSW 801	Lloyds 1,144	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314

RECENT ISSUES			
Vol '000	Vol '000	Vol '000	Vol '000
Abbey Nat 3,412	Cardbury 1,908	Lowtho 1,788	Royal Bank 1,017
Ad-Lyons 1,168	CU 742	Lucas 943	Royal Ind 2,982
Anglia 648	Courtauld 236	M&S 2,412	Sainsbury 6,681
ASDA 23,871	Enterprise 34	Maxwell 175	Scott & N 6,681
ASD Foods 245	Entenprise 376	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
Avon 3,521	Eurochem 318	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
Avon Wdg 798	Fortis 818	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BAA 1,885	Gen Acc 1,358	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BET 1,489	GEC 2,184	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
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BSA 1,959	Inchcape 943	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Airways 2,910	Kingsfisher 781	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Airways 5,241	Lassco 787	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Petrol 7,454	Lend Sec 3,191	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Steel 3,521	Land Sec 3,191	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BS Telecom 3,521	L&Q 283	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314
BSW 801	Lloyds 1,144	M&P 233	Scott Power 2,314

MAJOR INDICES			
Index	Value	Change	Vol '000
FT-SE 100	2,553.3	-5.2	1,144
FT-SE 250	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 1000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 1500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 2000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 2500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 3000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 3500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 4000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 4500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 5000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 5500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 6000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 6500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 7000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 7500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 8000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 8500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 9000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 9500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 10000	1,144	-1.1	1,144

TRADITIONAL OPTIONS			
Option	Value	Change	Vol '000
FT-SE 100	2,553.3	-5.2	1,144
FT-SE 250	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 1000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 1500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 2000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 2500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 3000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 3500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 4000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 4500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 5000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 5500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 6000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 6500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 7000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 7500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 8000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 8500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 9000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 9500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 10000	1,144	-1.1	1,144

LONDON TRADED OPTIONS			
Option	Value	Change	Vol '000
FT-SE 100	2,553.3	-5.2	1,144
FT-SE 250	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 1000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 1500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 2000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 2500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 3000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 3500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 4000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 4500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 5000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 5500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 6000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 6500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 7000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 7500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 8000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 8500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 9000	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 9500	1,144	-1.1	1,144
FT-SE 10000	1,144	-1.1	1,144

		Sector				Index				Sector				Index			
		Value		Change		Vol '000		Value		Change		Vol '000		Value		Change	
		Value	Change	Vol '000	Value	Change	Vol '000	Value	Change	Vol '000	Value	Change	Vol '000	Value	Change	Vol '000	
Continental	408	35	23	6	-	87	89	22	23	6	-	87	89	22	23	6	
(+472)	408	35	23	6	-	87	89	22	23	6	-	87	89	22	23	6	
GM	300	15	15	22	23	70	72	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	
GM	300	15	15	22	23	70	72	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	
(+348)	300	15	15	22	23	70	72	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	
Grand M	300	15	15	22	23	70	72	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	
(+845)	300	15	15	22	23	70	72	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	
ICI	100	125	34	66	74	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	
(+1258)	100	125	34	66	74	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	
Kingfisher	1300	49	92	67	92	99	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	
(+347)	1300	49	92	67	92	99	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	
Laidlaw	100	10	24	31	52	57	59	59	59	59	59	59	59	59	59	59	
(+225)	249	20	27	8	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Land Sec	228	109	17	27	18	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
(+503)	228	109	17	27	18	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
M & S	350	39	22	36	15	17	25	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	
(+272)	350	39	22	36	15	17	25	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	
Sanitary	326	19	21	12	16	26	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	
(+331)	326	19	21	12	16	26	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	
Shell	300	40	61	3	8	3	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
(+514)	300	40	61	3	8	3	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
South Beach	700	42	62	79	110	10	17	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	
(+799)	700	42	62	79	110	10	17	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	
Albery	260	20	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
(+727)	260	20	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Arundel	300	4	7	9	10	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	
Chase	400	17	28	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	
(+1415)	400	17	28	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	
Clayton	200	14	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
Dea	220	27	34	37	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	
FDI	200	44	12	10	22	23	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
Genet	280	24	37	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	
(+220)	280	24	37	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	
Glaxo	240	15	23	31	9	9	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	
(+455)	240	15	23	31	9	9	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	
Harrods	280	23	18	13	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	
(+455)	280	23	18	13	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	
John	280	23	18	13	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	
(+270)	280	23	18	13	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	
Reps	300	3	3	6	12	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	
(+755)	300	3	3	6	12	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	
Shell	700	46	71	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	
(+747)	700	46	71	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	
Hawth	800	21	45	65	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	
(+720)	800	21	45	65	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	
Hillman	200	3	3	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
(+2200)	200	3	3	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
Wills	200	1	4	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
(+2200)	200	1	4	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

COMMENT

BAe puts on a brave face

Sir Graham Day, chairman of British Aerospace, put as brave a face as possible on the complete failure of the group's rights issue yesterday. The company has its money, after all, and sentiment was set against the issue right at the start by the confusion and uncertainty caused by the boardroom coup that ousted Professor Sir Roland Smith. Hectic lobbying of shareholders by Dick Evans, the chief executive, and finance director Dudley Eustace, backed by the comforting figure of Sir Graham, has already helped restore longer-term confidence among some of the most outraged institutions. Only a late general rise in share prices would, however, have persuaded underwriting shareholders to subscribe rather than acquire their extra shares by the back door. The prophecy of failure was self-fulfilling, keeping BAe shares below the rights price.

Management has the strongest of motivations for helping shareholders to recoup at least some of their losses, to persuade them not to welcome prowlers on the look-out for loose stock. The strongest card has been Mr Evans' plain assertion: "We will not come back with any more cash calls". This is full of meaning for investors to whom the main attraction of BAe shares is their rare 9 per cent dividend yield. Sir Graham has committed his board to living within its means, which requires a fundamental change of outlook for a company still undercapitalised in comparison with its most important international rivals.

Consolidation rather than adventure is the priority. Peripheral assets will be sold. Operational management will concentrate on cutting costs and work in progress in the core defence, aircraft and Rover car businesses. Anything that looks like absorbing cash will, if possible, be shunted into a joint venture, with the satellite and regional airline businesses at the top of the list. French companies are Mr Evans' most favoured partners, despite their reputation for never being equal partners.

The implications for the long-term future of BAe can only be guessed. BAe's strategy, set under Sir Roland and presented when the issue was announced, has not apparently changed. Indeed, it has been set in concrete. The interpretation may well prove quite different as ambition takes a back seat. BAe's main businesses have scope to generate cash and much bigger profits than ever before after the rationalisation programme, which will eventually save costs on a dramatic scale. If, and when they do, on the back of recovery in their main markets, BAe shares would look a bargain at today's depressed price. Whether BAe will remain a world leader at the end of this process is quite another question.

Trying harder

The high street banks may seem like monolithic dictators to the small businessman whose finances have been roughly handled, but they too have their weaknesses. Their vulnerability is their intense rivalry, which has forced them into costly mistakes in the past, but now seems to be winning a better deal for all small businesses. Norman Lamont exploited this rivalry last July when he asked banks to draw up individual codes of conduct to answer the barrage of criticism about their inadequate service to small businesses during the recession. By shrewdly calling for separate codes, instead of imposing a single one devised by the Treasury, Mr Lamont turned the small business debate into a competitive issue. Confidential documents from Barclays show how hard it is working to better its neighbours.

The most notable feature of the bank's draft code, which will be launched next month, is its decision to send its 750,000 small business customers a breakdown of all the commission and interest charges ten days before the end of each quarter. This gives businessmen a week and a half to argue over any changes before, rather than after, they are debited. This makes Barclays' code rather more attractive than the one from Midland launched two weeks ago, although it falls short of demands from small business pressure groups for a service contract between banks and businesses. The new service will cost Barclays £3 million a year, although the bank is not planning to make any additional charge on customers. The banks may be high-handed and insensitive to their customers as Sir Gordon Borrie, director general of the Office of Fair Trading, claimed last week, but they are certainly sensitive about the activities of their rivals.

British and US pessimists rush in as recession ends

Anatole Kaletsky

argues that fears of a "double dip" recession on either side of the Atlantic are without foundation

Economics is aptly called the dismal science. The recession of 1990-1, a misfortune confined exclusively to the Anglo-Saxon countries, is over. In America, the end of the recession was officially confirmed yesterday with the announcement of annualised growth of 2.4 per cent in third-quarter gross national product. In Britain, too, output has almost certainly stopped falling, judging by yesterday's upbeat survey of business confidence from the Confederation of British Industry. But instead of celebrating the end of the last recession, economists on both sides of the Atlantic are asking whether the next one is about to begin.

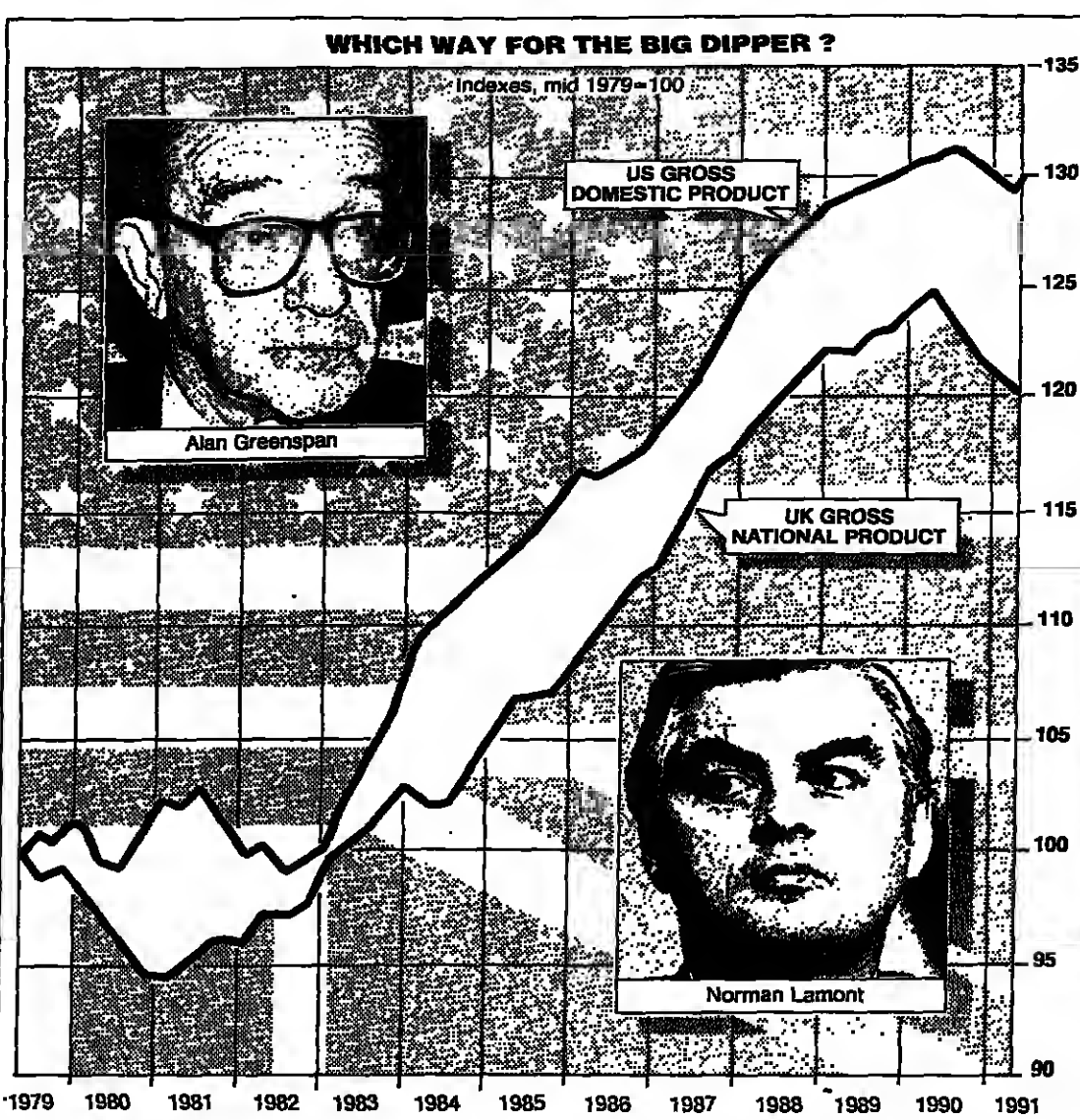
In America, financial and business circles are rife with talk of a "double dip", similar to the sudden fall in 1982 after a short-lived recovery from the Iranian oil crisis. President Bush's political advisers make no secret of their concern that a weak economy next year might undermine his re-election chances, despite opinion polls that put him further ahead than any president in modern times. Their anxieties appear justified.

In Britain, where the end of the recession has not been officially confirmed (third-quarter figures are due on November 19), worries about next year seem even better founded, although less widely expressed. Britain and America share many of the same structural handicaps, including excessive debt burdens, low productivity, growth-falling personal wealth and under-investment in manufacturing. The British economy also faces more immediate problems — very high real interest rates, a challenging exchange rate and the prospect of weakening demand in Germany, its main export market. To make matters worse, there is the political uncertainty created by the general election and the threat to sterling from the looming confrontation between the Bundesbank's 2 per cent inflation target and the German unions' 12 per cent pay demands.

Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, is unlikely to refer to any of these worries when he delivers the Treasury's latest economic forecasts in next month's autumn statement. This does not mean that his probable prediction of economic growth in the 2 per cent range is unrealistic. When Mr Lamont predicts a recovery next year, rather than a renewed recession, he is likely to be proved right. The question that economists and politicians should be asking is whether the recovery will be strong enough to cut unemployment, stave off more bankruptcies and satisfy the electorate.

Such questions are being asked in America today. Despite talk of double-dip recessions, the real concern in Washington is about a recovery that is too sluggish to raise living standards, control unemployment and revive investment. The Democrats are not banking on an outright recession to defeat President Bush. They hope to embarrass him with another statistic. Even if the economy grows 3 per cent next year, they say, the average annual growth rate during the four years of the Bush administration will have been only 1.4 per cent, the lowest of any president since the second world war.

But fears of a double-dip recession on either side of the Atlantic are unfounded mainly because recessions rarely occur without encouragement from the government.



recovery is one reason why the Treasury is right to consider the findings of forward-looking surveys, like the CBI's more significant than some of the backward-looking economic statistics. It is also a reason why the British economy, in which business and consumer confidence have risen rapidly this year, may appear to be on firmer footing than that in America, where consumers remain depressed.

Fortunately for the Americans, their economic recovery has a more powerful force behind it than consumer psychology. Essentially, the American economy is going to recover because of extremely low interest rates and a highly competitive currency. American interest rates, at 5 1/4 per cent, are at their lowest level for 15 years and the dollar is near the all-time low set six months ago. The fact that the American economy remains stuck in near-recession, despite this monetary stimulus, is symptomatic of the gloom among consumers and the structural weaknesses of American industry and finance. Consumer confidence remains low, because real wages and housing wealth have fallen steadily for the last three years. The banks are failing to pass on the benefits of low interest rates to borrowers — the profit margin on a typical home mortgage in America has risen from 2 to 4 per cent or more as banks try to recover the

immense losses they suffered in the property and leveraged buyout crazes of the last decade. Meanwhile, the export boom that accounted for more than half the growth in the American economy since the abrupt devaluation of the dollar in late 1987 has run out of steam.

But the economy's weakness in the face of low interest rates does not mean that the Fed is "pushing on a string", in the Keynesian phrase. It simply means that the damage done to the economy during the Eighties may now justify much lower interest rates and a much more competitive currency, than would have been imaginable ten years ago. If manufacturers are struggling to maintain their export growth when the dollar is worth DM1.70 and ¥130, then the White House and the Fed can simply try to devalue the dollar further.

Given the choice of waiting for a slow "natural" recovery such as that favoured by Mr Lamont and stimulating the economy with falling interest and exchange rates, there is little doubt which way American policymakers are likely to turn. By this time next year the world will be able to judge which was the more successful approach.

Balancing skill of man and machine

PEOPLE get in the way of new technology, undermining investments that would otherwise dramatically boost profits. A study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council reveals that too many companies can run into difficulties because too few recognise that it is people who have to ultimately work the new machines.

When firms discuss whether to introduce new manufacturing systems, factors such as interest rates and the future of the economy hold sway over the likely impact on the labour pool, the study has found. The result is that many firms find themselves scrambling to recruit skilled staff from outside, while resorting to unscheduled short-term solutions such as raising salaries and overtime payments for those staff able to work the new systems.

Paul Foley, one of the report's authors, said: "A greater emphasis on workforce issues at an early stage may well help to overcome the problems of recruitment difficulties, skills shortages and increased training costs, which appear to be the unexpected by-product of introducing new manufacturing technologies."

Rosy futures include a sharp rise in output, productivity, product quality, and material cost savings for those firms adopting new technologies such as computer-aided design.

The findings come from a survey of 52 large engineering firms in the Sheffield area by Dr Foley and Doug Watts, of the University of Sheffield. Preliminary findings are disclosed today at the launch of the council's New Technology and Firm Initiative in London. Most studies of this kind have focused on the role of new high-technology industries in regenerating Britain. This study focuses on traditional manufacturing firms that are introducing new technology.

Just over half of the firms surveyed had introduced new technology in the past three years, with investment sums ranging from a few thousand pounds to £2.4 million, for an average of £275,000. Those adopting new technologies enjoyed an average output growth of about 23 per cent, while growth among those that had not was 7 per cent. Nearly 70 per cent of firms adopting new technologies also reported increased productivity, 61 per cent saw improvements in product quality, while 57 per cent made savings on the costs of materials.

Increases in employment averaging about 8 per cent were also reported among firms adopting new technologies, whereas those who did not showed a 4.6 per cent decline. Firms investing in new manufacturing systems also claimed they had become more innovative, placing more emphasis on research.

On the downside, a third of firms said use of new technologies had made them dependent on a sole supplier. The main problem was sudden skills shortages, with more than a fifth of firms needing to recruit more skilled staff, and training costs rising at more than a third of firms.

NICK NUTTALL

Technology Correspondent

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Cycling the way of de Broë

SOON after taking over as head of business development at Williams de Broë, Philip Darwall-Smith has poached one of Kleinwort Benson's senior investment managers. Robin Walker-Arnott, who led an investment team at KB — and later had £200 million under his control — has joined along with team-mate Neil Langley. In so doing, he has reunited with Charles Perry, another investment manager, who left KB two years ago. Darwall-Smith, who was given the task of winding up Stock Group after the demise of British & Commonwealth, may have had more than simply a new client list in mind. Walker-Arnott is a keen cyclist, and his superb boss, as luck would have it, helps organise the annual London to Brighton cycle event.

In Tusa's shoes

JOHN Tusa, award-winning head of the BBC World Service, was back in the limelight last night to join in a debate on Eastern Europe. The choice was appropriate since not only was Tusa born in Czechoslovakia but his father, John, ran the British operations for Bata, the shoe company, for many years. Bata, which relocated to Canada in 1938, is now buying back into Czechoslovakia for a \$10 million deal, following a lead set by Volkswagen. "I only wore Bata shoes for the first 20 years of my life," says Tusa, a former *Newsnight* presenter. As such, he has something in common with Peter

Ratzer, whose Czech father helped Tusa's father run the British plant. Ratzer is group secretary and director of corporate finance at Eurotunnel.

Dealing a blow

BRIAN Kaye, newly appointed head of Fimat, the Loddoo financial futures subsidiary of Société Générale, has scored a direct hit on his rivals at Bank of America. He has signed up Alex Wilkinson as head of Fimat's dealing team at the London International Financial Futures Exchange, and persuaded two colleagues, Jacqueline Hewing and David Usher, to join him. "This is in line with our strategy of becoming a major broker in the shortest possible time," says Kaye, who is just back from Tokyo where, until recently, he ran SocGen's Japanese operations.

Double speak

INVESTMENT bankers in America are masters at the art of fobbing off useless queries. Now, some of their tricks have been committed to paper. A guide, *Business Baffle*, A



Cynic's Dictionary of Corporate Jargon, makes essential reading for anyone hoping to climb the corporate ladder. A boss's sympathetic "No one is suggesting you are to blame" really means "You are to blame". "I like your idea but we must proceed cautiously," means "You must be joking. Come back in five years". "Didn't we say this once before?" means "No". and "Let's have lunch sometime" means "Get lost".

THE new manager of the Leeds building society branch in Hartlepool, Cleveland, is a Mr Lenderyou.

Charitable words

SIR Trevor Holdsworth, chairman of National Power, takes time off from his busy schedule next month to attend what is believed to be the first UK business seminar aid of charity. The Roof Garden Club in Kensington, west London, is the unlikely venue for discussion on tax, recession and financial markets. The list of executives who had to decline invitations to speak at the event, on November 26, makes intriguing reading: Sir Ian MacLaurin, of Tesco, John Derek Birkin, of RTZ, John Banham, of the Confederation of British Industry, Alan Sugar, of Amstrad, and — predictably — Sir John Harvey-Jones. "We wrote to them all, but they were too busy," says Dave Shilling, a director of Interfax Systems, the organiser, which is hoping to raise £60,000 for Children Nationwide, a charity which funds research into children's diseases.

JON ASHWORTH

Share price and herd instinct

From Mr A.H.B. Franklin
Sir, It is clear, as shown by the recent rise in Ultramar, that many share prices bear little relationship to the real value. Come a rumour of a takeover (whatever the opinions of analysts or previous lack of appeal to fund managers), the price will begin to rise. Once a bid is made the victim will protest, no doubt quite correctly, "Too little, too low, laughable etc", and the consequent rise in the share price will prove the point.

Why is the City always so short term? A Mr Paul Slattery (October 22) urges clients to sell Forte. He may be right. Analysts are sometimes, certainly not invariably, but what price Forte shares if a hostile bid is made in the near future? Certainly higher, by far, than the current quotation. Mr Slattery will be forgotten — except perhaps by

any clients who took his advice — in the inevitable battle which will follow a bid. I admit that I see no immediate solution to this unreal situation. The shrewd private investor who assesses correctly and sticks to his guns will be justified in reaping the profit he deserves. Unless there is a change of heart by fund managers who own virtually control the Stock Market through sheer weight of money, this "cloud cuckoo land" Stock Market will persist.

If these powerful investors, already unloved by industry, ever decide to abandon their herd instinct and look further ahead than they do now, perhaps many quotations would begin to represent more closely their underlying value. Yours faithfully, A.H.B. FRANKLIN, 58 Bath Road, Chiswick, W4.

Demise of advisers is exaggerated

From Mr P. Tarrant-Willis
Sir, I went along to the Fimbra AGM apprehensively — the news has not been good for insurance brokers and independent financial advisers bombarded by gloomy reports of our early demise from competitors.

I was galvanised by the chairman's determination that sensible and fair regulation would promote both professional standards and the maintenance of the impartial adviser sector. The conflict of interest inherent in the satellite "independent adviser" arm of an insurance and investment provider would be resisted by demanding the rule of strict polarisation, and that the consumer's interest was best served by encouraging an impartial ad-

viser market to lead the way in keener bargains for those who wish to take expert advice.

News of our demise is greatly exaggerated, it seems. If Sir Gordon Downey and his colleagues succeed in the aims he stated, the broker and independent adviser associations will have much to be thankful for. The insurance and investment providers may expect to continue to have to endure the awkward and cynical inquiry which helps to improve the bargain that every consumer receives. Yours faithfully, PETER TARRANT-WILLIS, Life & pensions insurance broker and independent adviser, 108 Mill Lane, West Hampstead, NW6.

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flivver don't even think 32 miles to the gallon is going any great guns.

Or using five pints of oil instead of five quarts.

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Or racking up 40,000 miles on a set of tires.

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some of our economies, you don't even think about them any more.

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Or pay a small repair bill.

Or trade in your old VW for a new one.

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This advertisement was created by Doyle Dane Bernbach.

THIS IS the power of newspaper advertising. In 1962 "Think Small" grabbed America by the scruff of the neck. Almost single-handed, it lent an ugly little automobile a charm Americans found irresistible. (In 1949, VW sold 2 cars in the States. In 1962, 185,000.) Done well, newspaper advertising screams out for attention. There is nothing it cannot sell, not even a bug. Think big. Advertise in the newspapers.

This advertisement was placed by the Newspaper Publishers Association.



1 _____

[illegible]

MARKETS

OTHER STERLING RATES		DOLLAR SPOT RATES	
Argentina austral*	168.60-189.08	Australia	1.2708-1.2714
Australia dollar	2.1820-2.1833	Austria	12.00-12.02
Bahrain dirham	4.7600-4.7644	Belgium (Com)	36.10-36.23
Bahamian dollar	1.0653-1.0648	Denmark	1.5930-1.5242
Cyprus pound	0.7094-0.7095	Germany	8.8392-8.8400
Finland mark	7.5431-7.1078	France	8.9430-8.9360
Ghana cedi	2.5400-2.5400	France (Com)	1.7100-1.7110
Hong Kong dollar	13.2420-13.2395	Hong Kong	7.7702-7.7712
India rupee	45.60-44.62	Ireland	1.5929-1.5940
Indonesia rupiah	0.4744-0.4728	Italy	2.0770-2.0778
Malaysia ringgit	4.6829-4.6875	Japan yen	181.70-181.70
Mexico peso	20.00-20.00	Netherlands	2.7505-2.7575
New Zealand dollar	8.0985-8.0741	Netherlands	2.9500-2.9500
Saudi Arabia riyal	8.3327-8.4075	Norway	4.7350-4.7470
Singapore dollar	2.9933-2.9949	Portugal	147.00-147.20
S. Africa rand (Rm)	4.7600-4.7600	Spain peseta	166.85-1.7005
S. Africa rand (com)	4.9837-5.0018	Sweden	10.85-10.87
U. A. E. dirham	6.159-2.575	Switzerland	2.2320-2.2370
United States dollar	1.5000-1.5015	United States	1.5000-1.5015

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES						
	Period	Open	High	Low	Close	Volume
FT-SE 100	Dec 91	2897.0	2907.0	2870.0	2878.0	7489
Previous open interest: 35409	Jan 92	2957.5	2933.5	2925.0	2912.0	5686
Three Month Sterling	Dec 91	83.79	84.88	85.70	86.08	26808
Previous open interest: 145005	Jan 92	85.20	86.20	86.25	86.25	7504
Three Month Eurodollar	Dec 91	94.56	94.89	95.56	94.69	2728
Previous open interest: 37732	Jan 92	94.98	94.79	94.87	94.78	1255
Three Month Euro DM	Dec 91	90.05	90.27	90.64	90.57	6047
Previous open interest: 15883	Jan 92	90.78	91.11	90.91	90.91	5242
US Treasury Bond	Dec 91	98-18	98-18	98-14	98-18	2421
Previous open interest: 43874	Jan 92	98-18	98-14	98-14	98-18	2421
Long Gilt	Dec 91	95-00	95-14	95-14	95-12	30908
Previous open interest: 45874	Jan 92	95-13	95-13	95-08	95-17	356
Japanese Govt Bond	Dec 91	100-24	100-24	100-12	100-21	355
	Jan 92	100-25	100-25	100-12	100-21	355

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120.45	Aug	136.00	3.5 Fuel Oil	214 (-1)	220 (+1)
122.85	Jan	123.25	Naphtina	218 (-1)	85 (+1)
120.45	Aug	129.90			218 (-1)
6	Vol	133			

Volume: 177	
Now	Close: 130.0
Jan	125.4
Aug	140.5

MISSION LONDON MEAT FUTURES	
at	Live Pig (kgp)
Now	Open: 28.0
Nov	Close: 28.0
Dec	Jan
+0.00	Close: 28.0
+0.04	Close: 28.0
-15.9	Close: 28.0
107.06	Close: 28.0
-4.10	Close: 28.0
-62.4	Close: 28.0

BRIEF	
GNI Ltd (p/p)	
Nov 91	Hght: 1899
Jan 92	1580
Feb 92	1710
Apr 92	1710

Vol 322 lots	Open Interest: 3257
Baltic freight index 1651 +1	

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE		Robot Wolt	FOX MORRIS INDEX	
Cash 1404.0-1404.5 Smith	1389.5-1387.0	Vol: 457850		(Spot prices)
292.30-292.35	511.00-511.35	87925		
895.00-895.50	1014.0-1014.5	97875	Bid	Offer
5515.0-5520.0	5580.0-5585.0	2735	Nov	134.30 134.90
1151.0-1152.0	1180.5-1191.5	68075	Jan	134.80 135.00
7385.0-7390.0	7400.0-7410.0	27432		135.30 135.50
				Vol: 80

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7385.0-7390.0	7400.0-7410.0	27432		135.30 135.50
				Vol: 80

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Retirement homes come of age

Leading companies have formed an association of professional retirement property managers, Christopher Warman reports

In the past 15 years, purpose-built private retirement housing has grown to meet the demand from older people looking for secure, trouble-free accommodation. More than 35,000 retirement homes have been built, according to the National Retirement Housing Council, which provides a list of housebuilders offering retirement homes and sheltered housing.

The reputation the sector has earned for well-planned homes has occasionally been sullied by complaints about management and maintenance charge levels. So the National House-Building Council has devised a code of practice for sheltered housing.

The code, mandatory for all housebuilders registered with the NHBC, aims to ensure that potential buyers get detailed information about the procedures for management decisions and costs.

A council official says: "It is important that would-be buyers and residents know precisely what they are buying, how much it will cost and how any charges are calculated and reviewed."

A further development in the market has been the formation of an association of professional retirement property managers. The Association of Retirement Housing Managers, which will start operations next week, is the result of two years' research by leading companies providing management for up to 100,000 residents of privately owned retirement homes.

The association believes that retirement home buyers have become more discerning in their choice of a home for their retirement years and in the expectations of the management and services from their professional managers.

Accordingly, the association's aim will be to provide them with the high standard they expect, to promote quality and ethics in the industry and to investigate complaints against members.

The English Courtyard Association, which has built 19 courtyard developments since 1976, is refining its cottage and flat designs to make them as accommodating as possible for people with physical disabilities. The company maintains the four basic principles

of Noel Shuttlesworth, its founder: a courtyard plan, reflecting such traditional protected environments as college quadrangles and medieval almshouses; the location, with each scheme set in landscaped grounds within minutes of a village or small town centre; the quality of design and workmanship; and the emphasis on care-free living.

Aware that many residents increasingly have trouble getting about, Mr Shuttlesworth this year engaged as a consultant John Hick, a former cavalry officer paralysed from the waist down. After staying in new developments, he has been able to recommend improvements for incorporation in future designs.

Beechcroft Developments, another firm at the top end of the market, is in its scheme at Alton, Hampshire, a swimming-pool, which is an unusual feature for retirement homes. Guy Mossop, of Beechcroft, says: "We are convinced this is the right approach."

Beechcroft's latest scheme is in Cerne Abbas, Dorset. A group of nine 18th-century farm buildings is being converted and 15 cottages built in grounds that include meadows and a stream.

As with its other developments at Woodstock, Oxfordshire, and at Alton, the prices for two, three and four-bedroom properties range from £100,000 to £225,000. The Carletons, the latest scheme

of the Secure Group of Bristol, is in the heart of Wells, Somerset, near the moated Bishop's Palace. The development includes Carleton Court, 32 retirement apartments, partly in a new block and partly in a stone-built former textile factory. The two-bedroom apartments cost between £89,950 and £135,000.

Hays Park, 10 Shalford, Dorset, has 16 retirement apartments in the grounds of the 18th-century Hays House, now a nursing home. Ronald Clarkson, of Park Healthcare, aims to provide spacious accommodation, with drawing rooms of up to 370 sq ft, and fitted cupboards and box rooms in each apartment. He has sold eight of the apartments in the past four months. Prices range from £92,500 for one bedroom to £139,500 for two bedrooms, on 125-year leases, or from £74,000 to £112,000 on refundable life-occupancy leases.

Hunting Gate Homes finds that many retired people now prefer flats and bungalows that allow them to trade down. Hunting Gate has completed one development at Brixham, Cornwall, with a resident warden. Wren Court combines independence with the relief of not having to run a house and garden. Near the centre of the town, the one and two-bedroom apartments cost from £47,550 to £69,595, or from £40,000 under a shared-equity scheme.

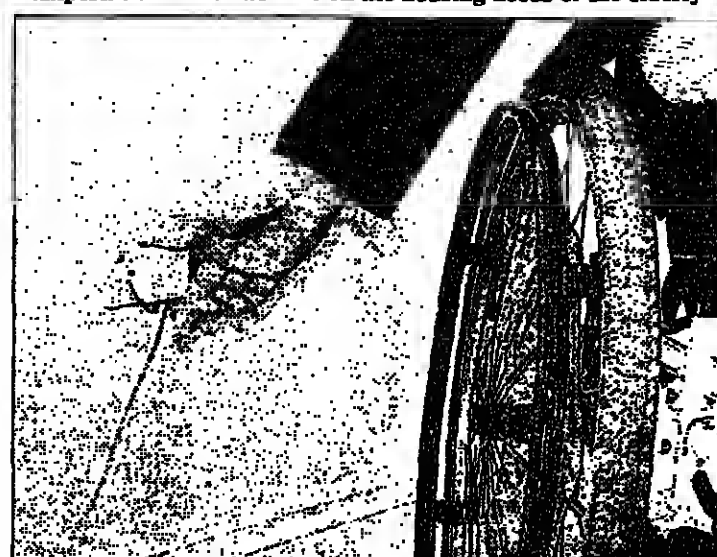
English Courtyard Association (01737 4311), Beechcroft Developments (0491 34975), Secure Group (0272 237 940), Park Healthcare (01751 8015), Hunting Gate Homes (0462 431 244)



Farm conversion: some of the Beechcroft homes developed from 18th-century buildings in Cerne Abbas



Expert: John Hick advises on the housing needs of the elderly



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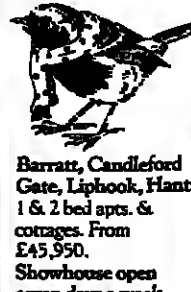
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Chancery Division

Law Report October 30 1991

Chancery Division

Trustees' duty to invest profitably

Harries and Others v Church Commissioners for England and Another

Before Sir Donald Nicholls, Vice-Chancellor

[Judgment October 25]

The Church Commissioners, investing the funds of which they were trustees, could take into account non-financial considerations only so far as they could do so without jeopardising the profitability of investments.

Sir Donald Nicholls, Vice-Chancellor, so held in a reserved judgment in the Chancery Division refusing to make any declaration sought in the R v Rev Richard Douglas Harries, Lord Bishop of Oxford, the Ven Michael Bourke, Archbishop of Bedford and the Rev William Whitlam. The defendants were the Church Commissioners and the Attorney-General.

Mr Timothy Lloyd, QC and Mr Laurence Henderson for the plaintiffs; Mr Robert Walker, QC and Mr Christopher Nugge for the defendants.

David Uowin for the Attorney-General.

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR said that the Church Commissioners administered vast estates and large funds but the trusts which they had to satisfy were diverse.

The Church Commissioners, a charity, were effectively the trustees of the fund and responsible for its investment policy. The Bishop of Oxford, himself a Church Commissioner, sought certain declarations in relation to the investment policy.

The good faith or the investment expertise of the commissioners was not questioned. But the plaintiffs contended that the commissioners fell into legal error by attaching over-riding importance to financial considerations and that they ought properly to have in mind the underlying purpose for which they held their assets was the promotion of the Christian faith through the Church of England.

They should accordingly not exercise their investment function in a manner which would be incompatible with that purpose even if it involved a risk of incurring significant financial detriment. They should give weight to ethical considerations, the plaintiffs said.

His Lordship said that charity trustees, in common with all other trustees, were concerned to further the purposes of the trust. To enable them the better to discharge that duty trustees had powers vested in them, among others powers of investment.

Where trustees held property as an investment to generate money, *prima facie* the purposes of the trust would be best served by the trustees seeking to obtain the maximum return, whether by way of income or capital growth, which was consistent with commercial prudence.

The commissioners' investment policy was set out in their annual report for 1989 and included the statement: "We do not invest in companies whose main business is armaments, gambling, alcohol, tobacco and newspapers."

His Lordship found that the commissioners already had an

ethical investment policy and could see nothing in it inconsistent with the promotion of the Christian faith. They had failed to exclude those items from their investments despite the conflicting views of the Christian faith. They had failed to invest in companies whose main business was armaments, gambling, alcohol, tobacco and newspapers.

The approach of the commissioners was not legally incorrect. On the contrary, the approach of the commissioners was correct. The plaintiffs wished the commissioners to adopt, in place of their investment policy, one which entailed taking into account non-financial considerations when that might put investment profits in jeopardy, would involve a departure by the commissioners from their legal obligations.

Whether such a departure would or would not be desirable was, of course, an issue in the proceedings. That was a matter to be pursued, if at all, elsewhere than in court.

Solicitors: Bates Wells & Braithwaite, Clifford Chance; Treasury Solicitor.

Price Waterhouse v BCCI Holdings (Luxembourg) SA and Others

Before Mr Justice Millett

[Judgment October 21]

It was in the public interest to require the disclosure of confidential information to the Bank of England in the performance of its supervisory functions under section 1 of the Banking Act 1987, there was a great public interest in disclosure of material to the enquiry set up at the end of July 1991 under the chairmanship of Lord Justice Bingham at the request of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England.

Mr Justice Millett so held in the Chancery Division in proceedings brought by Price Waterhouse against BCCI Holdings (Luxembourg) SA and other associated banking institutions.

Mr David Oliver, QC and Mr Paul Girolami for Price Waterhouse; Mr Richard M. Sheldon and Ms Susan Prevorse for BCCI and others; Mr William Charles and Mr Havers for the Treasury and the Bank of England.

not of material covered by legal professional privilege. The enquiry being non-statutory, it was not subject to the voluntary cooperation of witnesses. The public interest in maintaining confidentiality might be outweighed by some countervailing public interest in disclosure, and the latter was not limited to the public interest in detecting or preventing wrongdoing, see *Attorney-General v Guardian Newspapers (No 2)* [1990] 1 AC 109, 214, 268, 282.

After further consideration of the conflicting public interests, his Lordship said that he had not found the resolution of the competing interests to be easy, to all the cases cited in which the public interest in favour of disclosure had prevailed it had been either for the detection or prevention of wrongdoing, the prevention of a miscarriage of justice or the maintenance of public safety.

If those who set up the enquiry had thought that the public interest required all relevant material to be made available, they could have set it up under the 1921 Act. No doubt there were good reasons for not doing so.

When the information was confidential, the choice whether to volunteer it ought *prima facie* to rest with the person to whom the duty of confidentiality was owed, rather than with the person who owed the duty.

His Lordship had reached the conclusion that the public interest in disclosure ought to prevail there was an important public interest in the effective regulation and supervision of authorised banking institutions and the protection of depositors.

In section 39 of the Banking Act 1987, Parliament had chosen to accord greater weight to that public interest than to the maintenance of the duty of confidentiality, including banking confidentiality and even legal professional privilege.

It was in the public interest to require confidential information to be disclosed to the Bank of England to enable it to carry out its supervisory functions, there was at least as great a public interest in the disclosure of such information to an enquiry set up to review the Bank's past performance of its statutory functions, provide that dissemination of such information was no wider in the latter case than would be authorised in the former case.

That was given statutory recognition in section 83 of the 1987 Act. The distinction between documents obtained by the Bank to performing its functions and those which it ought to have obtained but had failed to obtain was unattractive.

The subject matter of the enquiry was at a level at once more abstract and more remote

from the details of underlying banking transactions than was involved in routine supervision and it was less likely that details of particular accounts would require to be identified, and the occasions when banking confidentiality was invaded were likely to be fewer and less serious.

The enquiry had undertaken to respect confidentiality where it could properly do so. The extent to which confidentiality would be invaded would depend upon the judgment of responsible persons at several different levels.

In all the cases cited in which disclosure had been resisted, albeit unsuccessfully, the disclosure has been not merely against the wishes of the person to whom the duty was owed, but had been contrary to his interests, often seriously so.

That had not been demonstrated to the court in the present case. His Lordship would therefore grant a declaration in favour of Price Waterhouse but limited to the material relevant to the enquiry's terms of reference, and Price Waterhouse should be required to maintain the confidentiality of underlying banking transactions except to the extent that disclosure was specifically requested by the enquiry.

Solicitors: Herbert Smith; Lovell White Durrant; Treasury Solicitor.

Unpaid community charge housing policy challenged

Regina v Forest Heath District Council, Ex parte West and Another

Before Lord Donaldson of Lynton, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Russell and Lord Justice Leggatt

[Judgment October 8]

Where a local authority adopted a housing policy that save in extenuating circumstances tenants would not be offered to persons to whom the authority, including in respect of non-payment of the community charge, and refused accommodation accordingly, leave would be granted to apply for judicial review on the ground that the decision was an abuse of power.

The Court of Appeal so stated in granting a renewed application for leave to apply for judicial review, made by David West and Mary Lucas, of Forest Heath District Council, to give them a council tenancy until they had paid their debt to the council in respect of the community charge.

Mr David Watkinson for the applicants; Mr Richard Rundell for the council.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS said that the applicants had strong grounds for submitting that there was an arguable case that the authority's policy was an abuse of power and unreasonable; see *Associated Provincial Picture Houses Ltd v Wednesbury Corporation* [1948] 1 KB 223.

The Local Government Act 1988, they submitted, contained elaborate and draconian powers enabling authorities to collect the community charge but did not entitle them to discriminate against those not paying their community charge when it came to performing their functions as a housing authority.

In collecting the community charge it was the duty of the authority to deal even-handedly with all those liable to pay the charge and not to deal differently with those who happened to be in need of housing accommodation.

Lord Justice Russell and Lord Justice Leggatt agreed.

Solicitors: Miller & Co, Cambridge; Mr David W. Burnip, Mildenhall.

In granting leave and remitting the matter to the High Court, his Lordship added that if on reflection the authority considered that its application would or might be likely to succeed, it might be thought more appropriate to rehearse the matter rather than incur all the costs involved in the proceedings.

Lord Justice Russell and Lord Justice Leggatt agreed.

Solicitors: Miller & Co, Cambridge; Mr David W. Burnip, Mildenhall.

Making out race bias case

King v Great Britain China Centre

Before Lord Justice Millett

[Judgment October 15]

It was for the complainant of racial discrimination to make out her case before an industrial tribunal, where there was no direct evidence of discrimination, was then entitled to look to the employer for an explanation as to why the complainant had not been selected for interview. If unsatisfied with that explanation the tribunal was entitled to say so and then to draw an inference that the discrimination was upon racial grounds.

That process of reasoning did not involve a reversal of the burden of proof but was merely a proper balancing of the factors which could be placed in the scales for and against a finding of unlawful discrimination.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Neill, Lord Justice Nourse and Sir John Megaw) so held in a reserved judgment on October 11 when allowing the appeal of Karen Lily King against the Great Britain China Centre from the decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal (Mr Justice Wood, Mr K. Graham and Mrs M. E. Sanderland) on February 5, 1990 allowing an appeal by the Great Britain China Centre from the decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal on August 25, 1988 that Miss King had been discriminated against by the centre on the ground of her race in her application for the post of deputy director.

Whereas legal professional privilege was normally an answer to compulsory disclosure, confidentiality only afforded protection against voluntary disclosure without the consent of the person to whom the duty of confidentiality was owed.

Under the country laws set up under the Tribunals of Enquiry and Evidence Act 1921 it could have compelled disclosure of confidential information, but

Price Waterhouse had been asked to submit evidence, together with copies of supporting documents. It was anxious to comply with that request and considered that it had a public duty to cooperate, but most of the material and information in its possession was confidential to BCCI and was confidential to them. BCCI wished to see in advance any evidence which Price Waterhouse intended to present, with a view to giving or withholding its consent. That process would go far towards violating the confidentiality of the enquiry, and the speed and effectiveness of its procedure.

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Activated suspended sentence cannot be partially suspended

Regina v Worsley

Before Lord Justice Stuart Smith, Mr Justice Waterhouse and Mr Justice Morland

[Judgment October 15]

A judge had no power under section 23 of the Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973 to set out the full ambit of a suspended sentence and then suspending part of the cumulative sentence thus arrived at. *R v Gow* (1983) 3 Cr App R (S) 250 made it clear that to adopt such a device was impermissible and unlawful.

The court had to decide whether the suspended sentence should take effect, either unaltered or for a lesser term, or whether no order should be made.

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Shirley Valentine ready to shine

European team arrives for Breeders' Cup showdown

THE first division of the Caister For Holidays Maiden Fillies Stakes at Yarmouth today should be well worth watching with next year's Oaks in mind.

For if ever a filly was bred to win the Epsom classic it is surely Shirley Valentine, who will be making her racecourse debut in the hands of Pat Eddowes.

As her name suggests, she is a daughter of the 1978 Derby winner Shirley Heights. Her connection with the Oaks comes through her dam, Slightly Dangerous, who followed in the footsteps of her dam Where You Lead by finishing second in the Epsom fillies' classic.

Where You Lead was also a

Henry Cecil lets her preparation gather momentum. If she is destined for stardom, she certainly ought to be capable of brushing aside her opposition this afternoon and she is my nap.

While information concerning the second division is rather more hazy, I am still led to believe that Alice Stewart's daughter, a daughter of Sadler's Wells, has shown sufficient promise to suggest that the 370,000 guineas she cost as a yearling may not have been misspent.

Shimmering Sands is given another chance in the Hopton Leisure Maiden Stakes, one that she is running over six furlongs. The Green Desert filly appeared out to last out

seven furlongs on her debut at Leicester where she was backed as if defeat were out of the question.

In the Vauxhall Handicap, Grove Serendipity is narrowly preferred to Thursday's Newbury runner-up Majed. Today Hide's gelding was beaten only a neck by the versatile Bookcase at Goodwood last time.

Veriga, from John Gosden's in-form stable, is strongly fancied to beat her three rivals in the Hemsby Holiday Stakes following that six-length victory over Conjuror at Newcastle earlier this month.

Peter Niven, who rode four winners at the corresponding Sedgemoor meeting last year, may have to make do with one

today when his best chance appears to be Desert Orchid's seven-year-old half-sister Pinemartin on 6lb better terms compared to when they last met at Hexham. Yet on that occasion she won by half a length.

Since Snowfire Chap, who won the Night Nurse Trophy with Niven aboard last year, has not run this season, I now prefer the in-form Over The Deel, whose stable companion Dancing River could well find the task of giving 6lb to the very promising Poetic Gem more than he can cope with in the Unlikely Lads Novices' Chase.

THE whole of a possible 19-strong European attack on the \$10 million Breeders' Cup day at Churchill Downs on Saturday was expected to have arrived by last night.

The British flight from Stansted, which arrived at 11.20am on Monday, included Du Soir, Polar Falcon and last year's runner-up, Priolo. The flight from Paris was delayed for 24 hours due to hydraulic problems.

At 2.30pm the same day, the nine French arrivals included the favorite for the European Breeders' Cup Juvenile, Priolo and Dear Doctor. "There were no problems at all," said Adrian Beaumont, of the International Racing Bureau. "All the horses arrived in good shape."

From MICHAEL SEELY, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

times in the past five years and the Turf three times in the eight-year history of the series.

Although the final shape of the field will not be known until Thursday, the European challengers to Tight Spot, the 3-1 American-trained favorite for the Mile, include Second Step, Shadyside, Kooynog, Danesbury Du Soir, Polar Falcon and last year's runner-up, Priolo.

Most professionals' idea of the European banker for the richest day's racing in the world is Polar Falcon, successful last time out in the Ladbrokes Sprint Cup at Haydock.

The John Hammond-trained colt is cast in the same mould as Last Tycoon and Royal Ascot winner in that he has shown

enough speed to win a group one race over sprint distances and yet has the stamina to last out a mile. "He's very well," said Hammond. "What we need now is luck to run him."

Although Tight Spot is favorite for the Mile, the French have first and second favorites in the Turf to Pistolet Bleu and Pigeon Voyageur, who finished third and fifth respectively behind Super Dancer in the Arc. The other Europeans are Dear Doctor, To The Groove, Quest For Fame, Sadler's Hall, Miss Alleged and Sagamore.

Yesterday, the miles of green-roofed bars and the 110-year-old grandstand were basking in the unseasonable late October sun.

D Wayne Lukas, the largest stakes-winning trainer in racing history, who has a record two Breeders' Cup victories to his credit, was holding court to the media.

Discussing Arazi's chance of becoming the first European-trained winner on dirt, Lukas said: "He faces a tough assignment. Apart from anything else, it must be the first time he handled two sharp turns to the left. With 14 runners, it would be easy for him to run into traffic problems. He'll have to be exceptional to win."

Two weeks ago, Lukas correctly forecast that Steinlen would win the Mile. This time he considers Twilight Agenda and Star Of Cozzene, to the Classic and the Mile respectively, his best chances.



Gosden: decided against sending Keen Hunter

MANDARIN	THUNDERER	RICHARD EVANS
1.15 SHIRLEY VALENTINE (nap).	1.15 COOPER BUTTERFLY.	3.15 VERIGA.
1.45 Shimmering Sands.	2.15 FLUIDITY (nap).	
2.45 Grove Serendipity.	2.45 Mr Wishful Well.	
3.15 Veriga.	3.15 Veriga.	
4.15 Jascorah.	4.15 A Little Precious.	
4.15 Cronk's Quality.		

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 1.15 SHIRLEY VALENTINE (nap). 2.45 Grove Serendipity. 3.15 Veriga.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM DRAW: 6F 5YD-1M 3YD, HIGH NUMBERS BEST SIS

1.15 CAISTER FOR HOLIDAYS MAIDEN FILLES STAKES (2m 1y 2f, 1m 3y) (11 runners)

(1) 48 AEGIRIA 2m 1y 2f (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(1) 48 AEGIRIA 2m 1y 2f (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(2) 49 EYECRAFT (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(2) 49 EYECRAFT (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(3) 50 CHARMOX 12 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(3) 50 CHARMOX 12 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(4) 51 COOPER BUTTERFLY 16 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(4) 51 COOPER BUTTERFLY 16 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(5) 52 DESERT MIST 14 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(5) 52 DESERT MIST 14 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(6) 53 LADY LYDIA 14 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(6) 53 LADY LYDIA 14 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(7) 54 PINE HATCH (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(7) 54 PINE HATCH (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(8) 55 POSITIVE ASPECT 22 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(8) 55 POSITIVE ASPECT 22 (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(9) 56 SHIRLEY VALENTINE (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(9) 56 SHIRLEY VALENTINE (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(10) 57 SHIRLEY VALENTINE (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(10) 57 SHIRLEY VALENTINE (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)
(11) 58 SHIRLEY VALENTINE (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)	(11) 58 SHIRLEY VALENTINE (2m 1y 2f) (1m 3y) (11 runners)

BETTING: 8-11 Shirley Valentine, 7-2 Cooper Butterfly, 15-2 Lady Lydia, 10-1 Aegria, 10-1 others. 1990: CLARE HEIGHTS 8-11 G. Carter (25-1) J. Farnham 18 ran

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AEGIRIA 4th of 10 to 17 to 18 to 19 to 20 to 21 to 22 to 23 to 24 to 25 to 26 to 27 to 28 to 29 to 30 to 31 to 32 to 33 to 34 to 35 to 36 to 37 to 38 to 39 to 40 to 41 to 42 to 43 to 44 to 45 to 46 to 47 to 48 to 49 to 50 to 51 to 52 to 53 to 54 to 55 to 56 to 57 to 58 to 59 to 60 to 61 to 62 to 63 to 64 to 65 to 66 to 67 to 68 to 69 to 70 to 71 to 72 to 73 to 74 to 75 to 76 to 77 to 78 to 79 to 80 to 81 to 82 to 83 to 84 to 85 to 86 to 87 to 88 to 89 to 90 to 91 to 92 to 93 to 94 to 95 to 96 to 97 to 98 to 99 to 100 to 101 to 102 to 103 to 104 to 105 to 106 to 107 to 108 to 109 to 110 to 111 to 112 to 113 to 114 to 115 to 116 to 117 to 118 to 119 to 120 to 121 to 122 to 123 to 124 to 125 to 126 to 127 to 128 to 129 to 130 to 131 to 132 to 133 to 134 to 135 to 136 to 137 to 138 to 139 to 140 to 141 to 142 to 143 to 144 to 145 to 146 to 147 to 148 to 149 to 150 to 151 to 152 to 153 to 154 to 155 to 156 to 157 to 158 to 159 to 160 to 161 to 162 to 163 to 164 to 165 to 166 to 167 to 168 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